THE LURE of ALASKA

A HISTORY OF TOURISM IN THE GREAT LAND

AN EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY THE ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

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Alaska State Museum
395 Whittier Juneau, Alaska 99801

Sheldon Jackson Museum
104 College Drive Sitka, Alaska 99835

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THE LURE of ALASKA

A HISTORY OF TOURISM IN THE GREAT LAND

JUNE E. HALL

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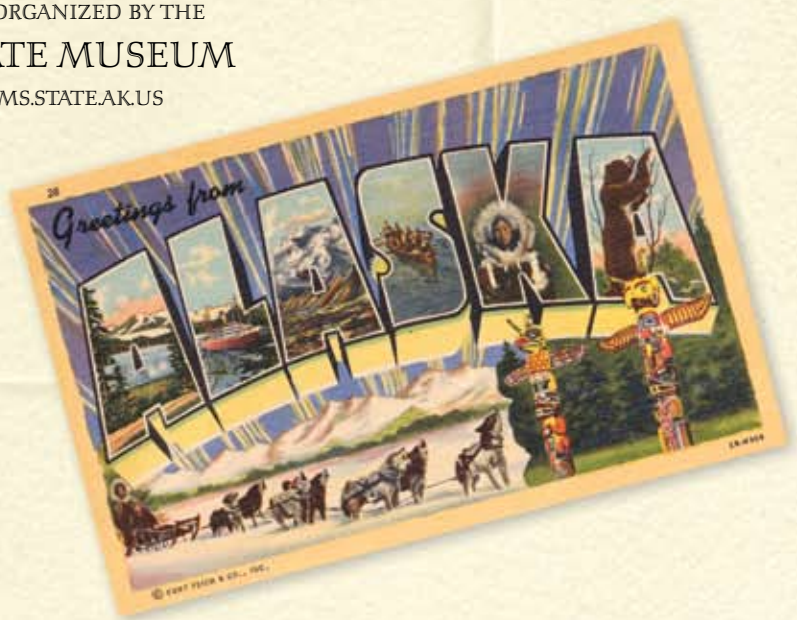


"U.S. Route 66 Scenic Missouri" postcard, 1950s.
Collection of the author.

PREFACE

This catalog and the special exhibit it accompanies explore the history of tourism in Alaska. Common themes and underlying issues are revealed that characterize American life—democratization, commercialization and rapid change, things that affect us all.

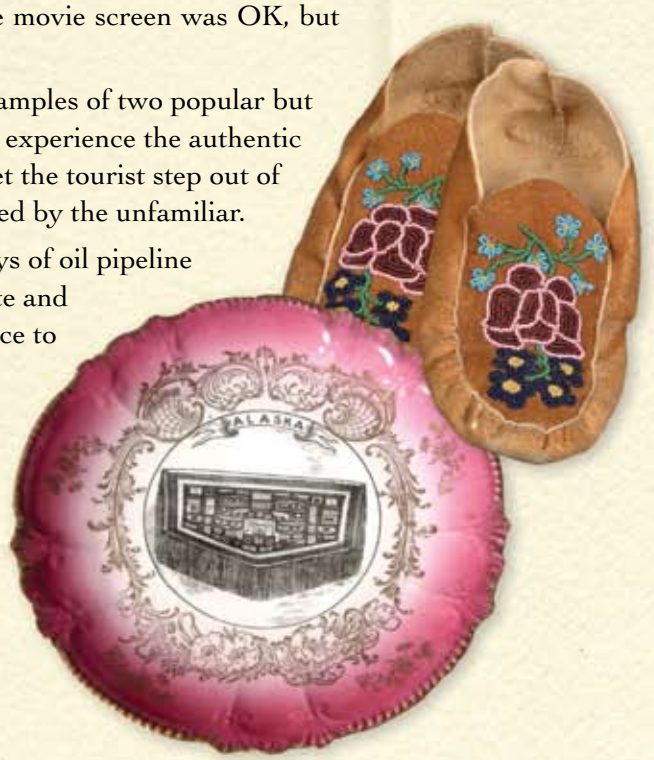
My love of traveling came from my mother. Route 66 went through our hometown and we drove it often. In 1955 my mother drove us kids from Missouri to Mexico City in a dark-green Chevy station wagon, the kind with the fake wood paneling on the side. On our way through the Mexican desert we were warned not to stop because of banditos on horseback. At that point I wished my dad had come along too, but he had stayed behind to doctor.

In this era, long vacations by car were becoming an American tradition. When I told people I was going to Mexico, they would ask if I meant old Mexico or New Mexico. Being a fifth-grader I thought I knew the difference. But what an eye-opener the trip was for me; I was changed when I got home.

The next year we drove out to the newly-opened Disneyland. Maybe my mother thought that it would be tame compared to Mexico. And it was. Everything was so perfect and clean, I couldn't believe it. What was this place about? Fantasy on the movie screen was OK, but walking around in it felt strange.

These vacations are quintessential examples of two popular but very different reasons why people travel: to experience the authentic (foreign) and to find the ideal. Both types let the tourist step out of ordinary life and be challenged or entertained by the unfamiliar.

I came to Alaska during the boom days of oil pipeline construction wanting to see what this remote and mythic place was like. I never left. The choice to curate this exhibit was an easy decision. It was an opportunity to explore a road through Alaska history.



Athabascan beaded moccasins, ASM II-C-46; *Alaska souvenir plate with Chilkat blanket.*
Collection of Candy Waugaman.

Beaded leather pennant.
SJM IV-X-60

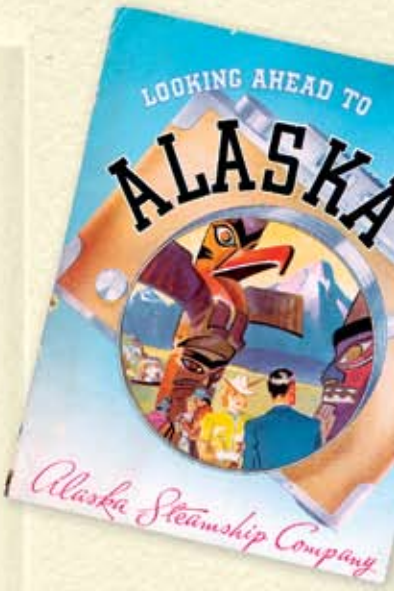
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fortunately for the people of Alaska, their history is carefully preserved by many institutions across the state, and their extensive collections made this exhibit possible. The Alaska State Museum, the Alaska Historical Library and the Alaska State Archives collections formed the major basis for the show and catalog. Important loans were made by these individuals and institutions: Dick Wood, Alaskan Heritage Bookshop, Juneau; Candy Waugaman, Fairbanks; Phyllis Brown of Skagway, executor of the George & Edna Rapuzzi Collection; Karen Boddy, Marie Darlin, T. Terry Harvey, Marcia Nye, Ralph Swap and Ron Klein of Juneau; Mavis Irene Henricksen and Maxine Selmer of Skagway; Skagway Museum; Anchorage Museum at the Rasmuson Center; Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka; University of Alaska Rasmuson Library, Fairbanks; Museum of the North at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks; Juneau-Douglas City Museum and the Isabel Miller Museum, Sitka.

So many people deserve credit for giving shape to the exhibit and catalog. I could not have hoped for more talented people to work with. I am grateful to Bruce Kato, Alaska State Museum Chief Curator, for being asked to curate this exhibit; he knew the importance of the subject and my love for vintage souvenirs. The hard work and sincere interest of the staff at the museum, the state library and the state archives contributed beyond the call of duty. Paul Gardinier and Bob Banghart, ASM exhibit staff, brought wonderful creative ideas and energy to the exhibit process.The unequaled abilities of Ron Klein as photographer and Laura Lucas as designer combined to make the history of tourism a visual delight. The expertise of Janice Hall, Molly Lee and Steve Henrikson improved the manuscript considerably. I owe a special debt to Jamie Chevalier, who lent her insight and edited the text into final form.

I thank you all.

June E. Hall
Guest Curator



RIGHT: *Alaska Steamship Company brochure,* Looking Ahead to Alaska. ASM 2003.33.9

Souvenir book of NW Alaska, c. 1900.
ASM III-M-12

ABBREVIATIONS

AMRC	Anchorage Museum at the Rasmuson Center
ASA	Alaska State Archives, Juneau
ASM	Alaska State Museum, Juneau
ASLHC	Alaska State Library Historical Collections, Juneau
JDCM	Juneau-Douglas City Museum
TBC	The British Colonist, Victoria
IMM	Isabel Miller Museum, Sitka
KGRNHP	Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Skagway
MNUAF	Museum of the North, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
PCA	Photographic Collection Archive
RBCM	Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria
RG	Record Group
SJM	Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka
SM	Skagway Museum, Skagway
UAFRL	University of Alaska Rasmuson Library, Fairbanks
UWL	University of Washington Library, Special Collections, Seattle

Origins of the Vacation

Touring is an ancient activity and the desire for discovery is as strong as ever. But tourism as we know it today is relatively new, and as a global industry it was unknown a century ago. In previous centuries leisure travel was limited to the aristocracy and the wealthy. In the eighteenth century, the European Grand Tour was *de rigueur* for anyone who hoped to achieve polish, find a rich husband, or gain entry into the parlors of the political elite. This type of tourism was seen as having a high moral and educational purpose; the privileged could spend a year or more completing this class duty. The evolution of tourism from a leisured activity of the few to the quick get-away of the many is reflected in the history of tourism of Alaska.

A Tourism Revolution

Of the many historical factors that shaped modern tourism, the Industrial Revolution (c.1760-1830) was the most significant. England, birthplace of the revolution, saw the birth of mass tourism as well. The social, economic and political forces unleashed in this era created the working and middle classes. The industrial work week created the weekend and with it the structure necessary for leisure travel. Rising consumerism made spending money on excursions socially acceptable, and status became linked to holiday travel. The advances of the Industrial Revolution brought radical changes and raised issues which would echo throughout the history of tourism. Darwin's theory of human evolution published in 1859 ignited interest in "exotic" peoples, while the new field of anthropology framed ideas of the so-called savage and the civilized. The incipient Women's Rights Movement gave women the courage to travel independently, even to Alaska, and women often outnumbered men.

With convenient travel open to the middle class, English entrepreneur and Baptist minister Thomas Cook invented the package tour in 1845 and thus modern tourism. Cook saw his tours as part of the democratic process and the "advancement of Human Progress."[2] His uniform pricing and service opened

"Day by day it is more and more apparent that some holiday of rest and relaxation …is rapidly becoming one of the essentials of our exciting twentieth-century existence. What was once a question of caprice and luxury is now a necessity…."[1]

Canadian Pacific Railway Company brochure, 1911

top to bottom: Collier's National Weekly *magazine cover.* ASM 90.38.1
Florida souvenir plate and Tin Can Tourist Camp postcard, c. 1920s.
Collection of the author.

travel to a wider public, but the package tour also packaged the tourist and restricted the traveler to a standardized experience.

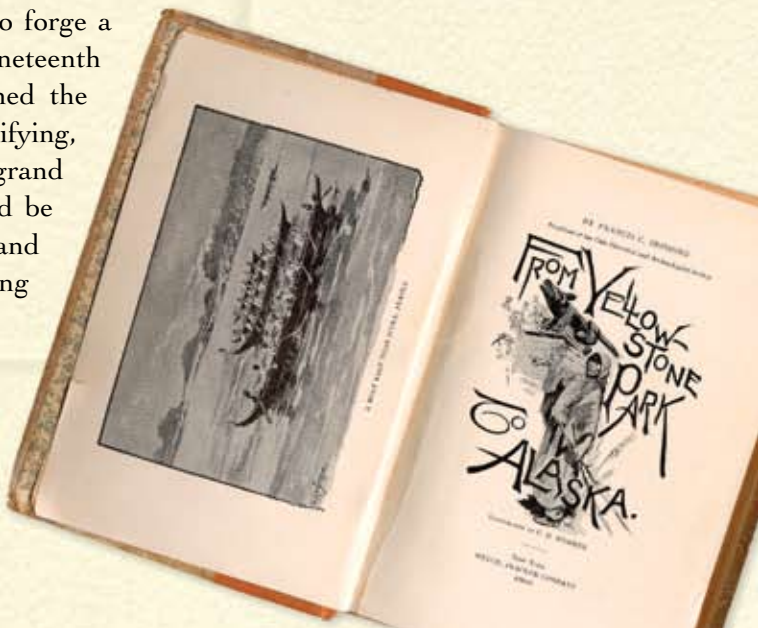
Sublime Sightseeing

The Industrial Age with its hard reality of grit, dirt, and noise provoked its own counterbalance—the Romantic Movement (1780-1850) with its passionate emphasis on communing with nature. This yearning to understand and view the natural world was expressed in current ideas of the Picturesque and the Sublime. The sublime landscape produced intense feelings of awe, dread or terror; the picturesque included both landscape and "children of nature" conceived in pretty, nostalgic, or exotic terms. Early travel brochures in America and Alaska used poetic language and romanticized images based on these sensibilities, and they became major themes in Alaska tourism. To be truly sublime, a tourist site needed to be remote and the journey to it rugged. Niagara Falls qualified until the Erie Canal was completed in 1825 and the mighty falls were easily reached. Later in the century, Alaska would fulfill the requirements of the sublime and picturesque with a long and hazardous sea voyage, exotic cultures and untamed wilderness.

Niagara Falls souvenir plate, made in Germany.
Collection of the author.

When wealthy Americans of the Gilded Age toured their own country, the Catskill Mountains along the Hudson River became a substitute for Roman ruins or Gothic cathedrals. They began to view their own magnificent wilderness as a way to forge a national identity. (Lofgren 1999: 35-39) "In the early nineteenth century, artists, philosophers, and writers transformed the wilderness of the eastern half of the nation from a terrifying, dangerous, and culturally embarrassing locale to a grand temple in which the unique destiny of America could be celebrated."[3] Alaska was transformed in the same way and its natural wonders contributed to America's imposing inventory and evolving identity.

Iroquois beaded bird, c. 1880s. ASM II-B-743. *By the late eighteenth century, Indian beaded items were made for the souvenir market and sightseers eagerly bought them at tourist sites.*



From Yellowstone Park to Alaska, *Francis C. Sessions, 1890.*

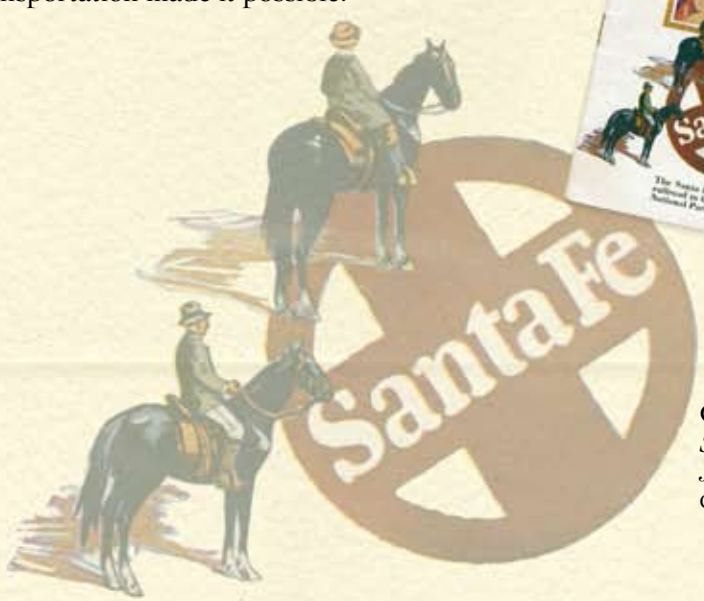
Yellowstone National Park, *Union Pacific Railroad booklet, 1923.*
Collection of the author.

The Romance of the Rails

American pleasure-seekers of the 1840s complained that Saratoga Springs (New York) was no longer fashionable because the day-long train ride from Manhattan made it too accessible. A few decades later the modern vacation took shape when salaried middle-class workers received time off with pay to recover from their "brain work." At the beginning of the twentieth century, more than one-third of white-collar workers in the manufacturing industry had annual vacations; the production workers were thought not to need or want them.

The speed of tourism development in America accelerated when "the major transcontinental railroads, the nation's preeminent corporations, used their vast system of influence, distribution, and finance, to construct, market, and sell attractions to a national market" and their rhetoric encouraged Americans to link "tourism with their mission of nation building and the national mythology of Manifest Destiny…."[4] The Northern Pacific Railway, with profit in mind, targeted the spectacular natural wonders of the Yellowstone area as a tourist destination. With relentless lobbying, the company finally saw President Ulysses S. Grant make it the first national park in 1872. Alaska's first national park was developed for many of the same reasons and improved train transportation made it possible.

Alaska and the Yukon, *Canadian National Railway booklet.*
Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.



Grand Canyon Outings, *Sante Fe Railroad brochure, July 1930.*
Collection of the author.

Souvenir tin of campers.
Collection of the author.

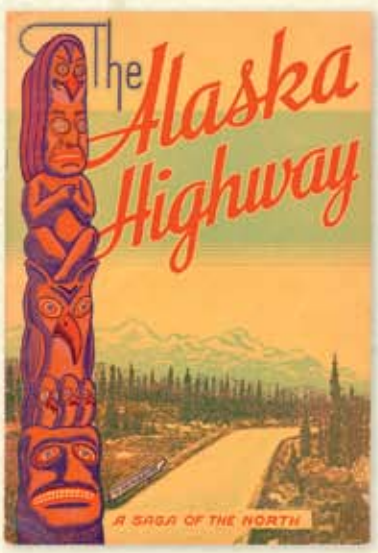
See America First

The campaign to "See America First" was initiated by Western businessmen around 1906 and aided by the automobile. Yosemite Valley hosted 33,000 motorists in 1915. And by the early 1930s, the profits in the tourist industry would not come "from serving squab to the few but from selling gasoline, hamburger sandwiches, and postcards to the many…."[5] In 1953, cars were used for 83 percent of travel. Middle-class Americans were in love with the road, and their vacations were now informal, fun and fast. "Travel was not designed to make them better, wiser, or more prepared. … [It] did not have to mean anything more than an opportunity to get away."[6] Road access to Alaska achieved in the 1940s not only increased tourism dramatically, but enhanced its frontier image.

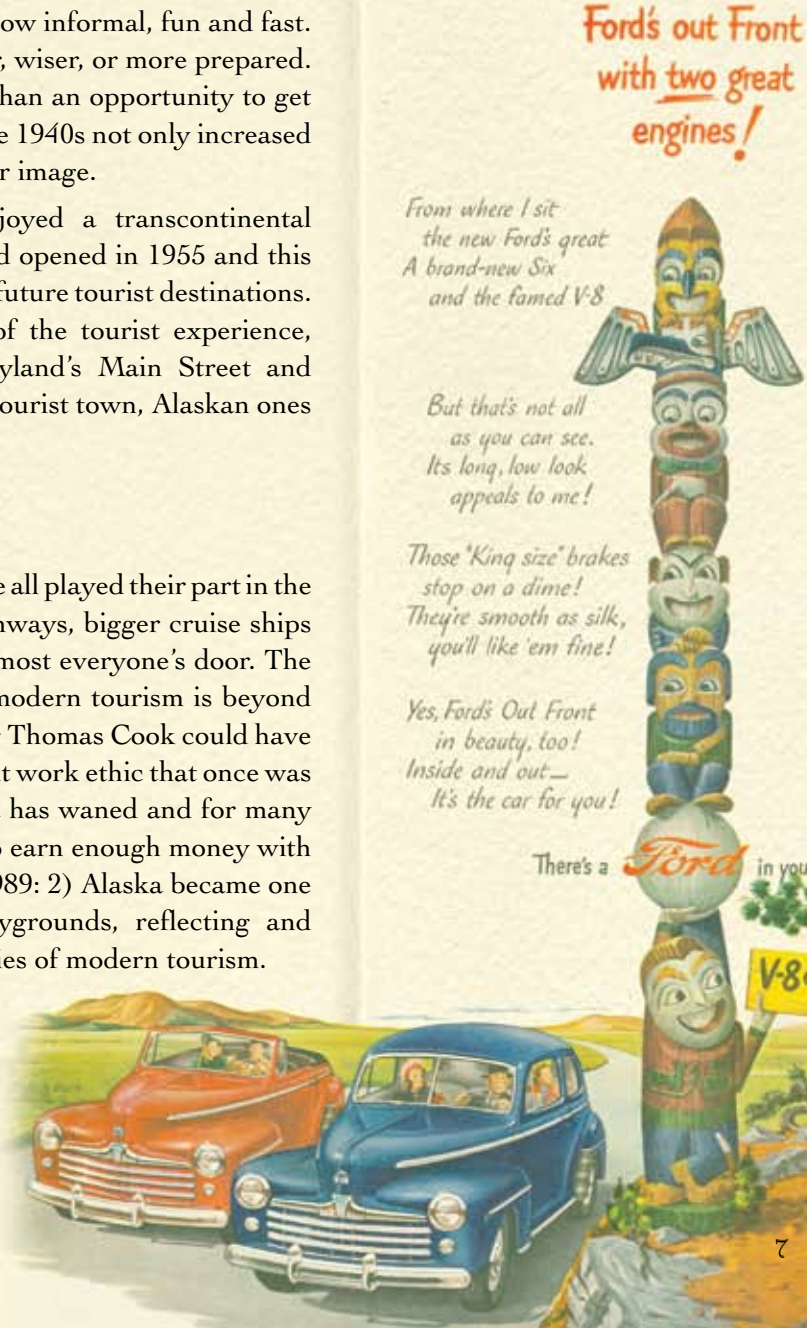
After World War II, Americans enjoyed a transcontinental highway all the way to California. Disneyland opened in 1955 and this manufactured theme park would influence all future tourist destinations. Although fantasy had always been a part of the tourist experience, here the inauthentic became reality. Disneyland's Main Street and themed settings have been copied by many a tourist town, Alaskan ones included.

On a Large Scale

Consumerism, nationalism and patriotism have all played their part in the history of American tourism. Now, more highways, bigger cruise ships and larger airplanes bring mass tourism to almost everyone's door. The scale and efficiency of modern tourism is beyond what early tour operator Thomas Cook could have imagined. The Protestant work ethic that once was so pervasive in America has waned and for many the goal of working is to earn enough money with which to play. (Smith 1989: 2) Alaska became one of America's great playgrounds, reflecting and magnifying all the realities of modern tourism.



left: *Alaska Highway brochure.* ASM 96.3.1



right: *Ford Motor Company ad, 1940s.* ASM 99.12.7

Traveling to Wonderland

By 1905 Alaska was spotlighted on the world stage as a fashionable tourist destination. This remote territory, once ridiculed as "Seward's Folly" or "Walrussia," gained status among the traveling elite. In fact, to the trendsetting tourist its remoteness had strong appeal. The public imagination was fed by a flood of vivid Alaska travel memoirs in books and magazines that extolled this sublime wilderness, still pure and untainted by man. The required long journey by water added to the drama. Everything about Alaska seemed unfamiliar, including its picturesque people. Then, as now, these were desirable features in a trip or destination. Their symbolic qualities became powerful magnets for travel to Alaska.

In the early 1900s, many American tourists looked upon Europe as an unpatriotic destination, whose cultural landmarks lacked the moral purity of America's natural wonders. But the Wild West was tamed and no longer novel; it existed more convincingly in Buffalo Bill Cody's show than it did on the Great Plains. The newest frontier for the insatiable traveling public was Alaska, the Last Frontier. Traveling north was a logical extension of touring the West, and the travel promoters were billing Alaska as the New Eldorado.

Manifest Destiny for Alaska

The concept of Manifest Destiny spurred thousands to migrate to the West. This expansionism was promoted by Secretary of State William Seward, the "Father of Alaska," who championed the purchase of Alaska from the Russians in 1867. Seward was convinced that America had both the need and the right to expand into

"Have you been to Alaska? Have you climbed a glacier?'....And if you have not, why not?' For the Alaskan trip today has taken its place among the world wonders, among the things that the well-informed must enjoy. It is getting to be no longer fashionable to boast of having fished in the Norse fjords, chased butterflies in Iceland, gone pony-riding in the Hebrides or have been bronco-busting in Arizona...unless one can say also that he has caught halibut at Killisnoo or photographed the totem poles of old Kasaan." [1]

Pacific Coast Steamship Company brochure, 1905

Tourists at crevasse in Muir Glacier, 1890s.
ASLHC PCA 87.2031

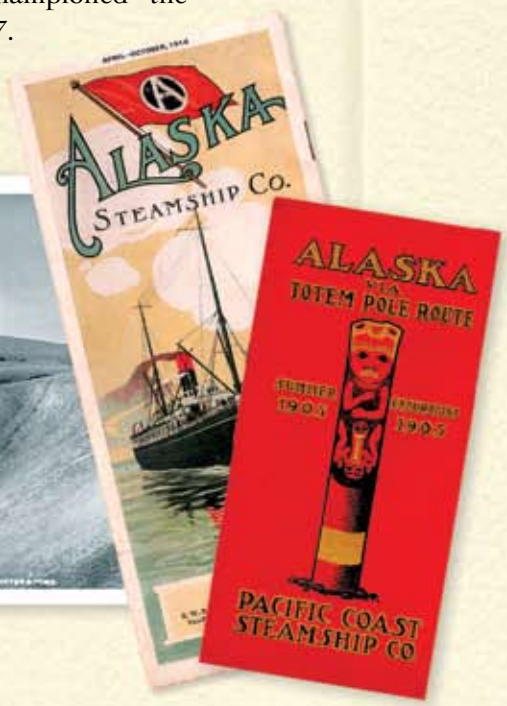


ILLUSTRATION DETAIL ABOVE AND BROCHURE RIGHT
Alaska Steamship Company brochure.
Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

BROCHURE RIGHT (RED): Alaska via the Totem Pole Route, *Pacific Coast Steamship Company booklet, 1905.* ASM 2006.2.1

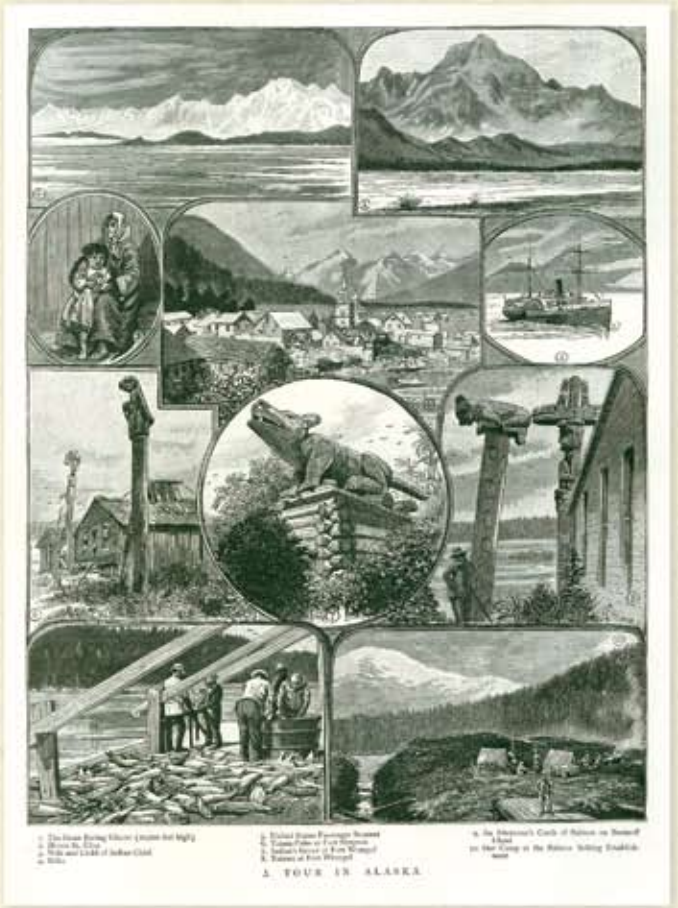
new territory, including Alaska and Hawaii. The transcontinental railroad connected both coasts in 1869, and the Northern Pacific Railway extended to Portland, Oregon, in 1883. Tourists journeying to the west coast in elegant railroad cars came to the end of the line. Where to go next? The railroad and steamship companies had an answer. In 1900, the Northern Pacific Railway offered its North Coast Limited passenger service from Chicago to Portland. A combined itinerary included a trip to Yellowstone Park by rail, then to Alaska via steamers that could be boarded in San Francisco, Tacoma, Seattle or Victoria.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, tourists to Alaska mingled with explorers, traders, U.S. Army personnel, missionaries and gold seekers. Tours were independently organized, and William Seward's trip to Alaska in 1869 might be considered the first tourist excursion, mixing business with pleasure. Sheldon Jackson, a Presbyterian missionary, brought interested church members in 1879 to view the progress of his mission and the wonders of the Great Land. In 1881, Victoria's newspaper, *The British Colonist*, reported that "Tourists on board the *Los Angeles* ascended a glacier at Harrisburg (most likely Juneau's Mendenhall Glacier), after which the steamer went on to Chilkat. They were delighted with the trip."[2] That same summer the first commercial tour took place. Henry Villard escorted General Nelson A. Miles, commander of the Department of the Columbia, a military band, and an excursion party of 80 northward. (Hinckley 1972: 147)

Cabinet card of unknown collector, c. 1890-1895.
Collection of Richard Wood.

below: *Logo from Alaskan Tourist booklet.*
Collection of Candy Waugaman.

The Alaskan Tourist



The Graphic *newspaper, "A Tour in Alaska," 1890.* ASM V-A-770

ABOVE: *Map detail. See page 14.* ASLHC PCA 2002.7.1

LEFT: *Steamship tourists.* ASLHC PCA 44.10.142

Steamship memorabilia. FROM LEFT: *Canadian Pacific Steamship Company Farewell Menu,* COURTESY OF ALASKAN HERITAGE BOOKSHOP; *Alaska Steamship Company sticker,* ASM 98.36.7; *Pacific Steamship Company tea pot,* ASM 92.49.1; *SS* Islander *carafe,* ASM III-O-57; *passenger ticket,* ASM 92.42.86; *Alaska Steamship Company officer's hat,* ASM 2005.18.1.

Sailing Sheltered Seas

Before the Alaska Highway was built (in the 1940s), the only practical way to reach Alaska was by boat, and those who sailed the Inside Passage gave glowing reports about their journey. This inspired the owners of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company to begin monthly sailings from San Francisco through the Alaska Panhandle islands in 1881, but their stops were irregular. By 1884, a regularly-scheduled "Inside Passage Tour" looped around the southern Panhandle and carried 1,650 excursionists. Five thousand passengers sailed this route via steamship in 1889. By 1895, the round trip from San Francisco lasted about 14 days and a first-class ticket to Juneau cost $52 or $1,081 in 2005 dollars. A passenger was advised to "provide himself with warm underclothing, a serviceable traveling suit, thick boots, and rubber overshoes, for use in clambering over glacial ice…."[3]

In the late nineteenth century, more companies took up the Alaska route. Canadian Pacific Railway started the Princess Line, and Pacific Steamship Company

LEFT: *SS* Alaska *at Seattle docks.* ASLHC PCA 44.09.058

ABOVE: *Alaska Steamship Co. ticket.* ASM 92.42.86

sailed the Admiral Line. In 1890, the *Juneau City Mining Record* reported that steamships were coming thick and fast. At times, at least four steamers were in the harbor, and the elegant *Queen* carried more than 150 excursionists. The Alaska Steamship Company, founded in 1894, became one of the largest and eventually connected Seattle to Nome and Unalaska. On the way south the ships might stop at obscure places like Shakan, Killisnoo, Loring or Kasaan. Personalized side trips to small villages by smaller steamer or Native-guided canoe could be arranged. Stopping at a glacier was one of the most important parts of any itinerary, and over the decades the Muir, Taku and Davidson glaciers shared the attention. Captain James Carroll pioneered a steamer route into Glacier Bay in 1883. Native leader John Kadashan had guided John Muir into the bay by canoe in 1879. Muir later wrote glowing newspaper articles with descriptions of its fairyland appearance.

"The Alaska Line" logo.

"Kodakers in Peril Strait, Alaska" 1893. Lantern slide published by Rau.
Collection of Richard Wood.

left: *Tourists in steamship stateroom.* ASLHC PCA 44.9.39

below: *Children's menu, Alaska Steamship Company.*
JDCM 2005.06.303

right: *Dining salon, SS* Mt. McKinley.
ASLHC PCA 44.09.012

Pacific Coast Steamship Company souvenir spoon.
Collection of the author.

TOTEM POLE OF THLINGET CHIEF KIAN, KETCHIKAN, AL

Tourists at Chief Kian's totem pole, Ketchikan postcard
COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR.

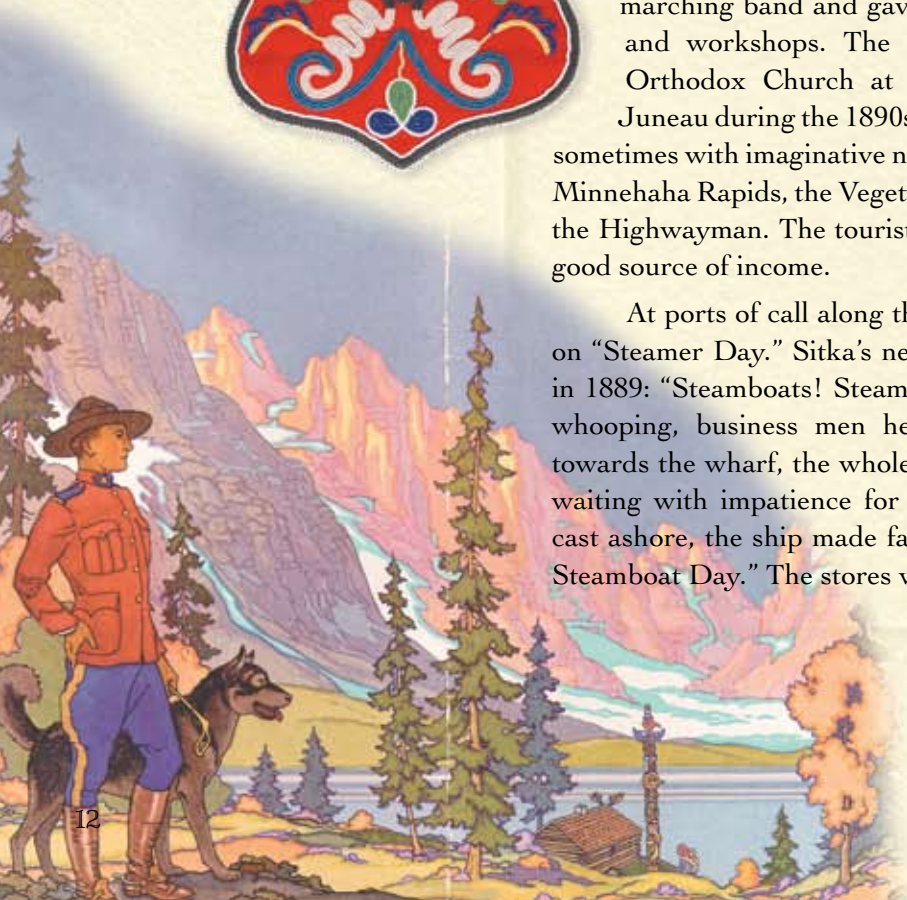
Tlingit beaded wall pocket. ASM II-B-70

SEEING THE LAST FRONTIER

Sometimes sightseers were brought face to face with the harsh reality of frontier Alaska. In 1883, only three years after Juneau was founded, excursionists Edward Pierrepoint and his father toured the town. They escaped a potential gun battle and witnessed the hanging of a Native man. In his travel book *Fifth Avenue to Alaska*, Pierrepoint recalled, "We moved away in silence, and went sadly back to the steamer; and as we left this place of violence and lawless death, we felt that our government had neglected its duty…. As we slowly steamed away in the dusky afternoon, we looked back from the deck" and "saw the swinging body of the dead, and heard only the lapping of the wavelets on the beach…." [4]

Most of the time tourists walked to sightseeing opportunities. Onshore activities were few and provided haphazardly. In Ketchikan, tourists gawked at totem poles and were awed by the silver hordes of spawning salmon at a local creek. Chief Shakes' Tlingit clan house and old fort ruins were picturesque attractions in Wrangell. The Rev. William Duncan, the founder of the religious colony of New Metlakatla, met ships with a Tshipshian marching band and gave educational tours of the town's cannery and workshops. The old Russian buildings and the Russian Orthodox Church at Sitka charmed romantic sentiments. In Juneau during the 1890s, the Ladies' Aid Society announced tours, sometimes with imaginative names—the Indian Village, the Mossy Dell, Minnehaha Rapids, the Vegetable Garden, the Bridge of Signs and Billy, the Highwayman. The tourist dollar was just beginning to be seen as a good source of income.

At ports of call along the Inside Passage townspeople turned out on "Steamer Day." Sitka's newspaper, *The Alaskan*, captured the scene in 1889: "Steamboats! Steamboats! Steamboats! Boys yelling, Indians whooping, business men here and there, excited crowds rushing towards the wharf, the whole town in a furore of excitement and waiting with impatience for the lines of the steamboat to be cast ashore, the ship made fast to the wharf…. Thus it is on Steamboat Day." The stores were opened, even at midnight.



LEFT: *Illustration from White Pass & Yukon Railroad brochure.*
OPPOSITE PAGE: *Logo from brochure.*
COURTESY OF THE ALASKAN HERITAGE BOOKSHOP.

"First excursion train in Alaska, Skagway, July 21, 1898," postcard.
Collection of the author.

The Golden North

For a time the northern gold rushes became part of the attraction of Alaskan travel. Here was an authentic life experience like no other, and tourists wanted to witness the exciting rush of prospectors and share in the hubbub of the boom towns. At times prospectors seemed more like tourists. Some gold strikes resulted in huge mining operations that were attractions in themselves. Well-heeled tourists romanticized the industrial power of America and eagerly toured huge gold-crushing mills and underground tunnels, exalted by the scale of operations and noise of the machines.

During the height of the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898, tourists in Skagway clambered on board flatbed trains that went only four miles out of town along the fabled White Pass route. They must have fantasized about the adventurous life of the gold-seekers and also dreamed of striking it rich. In 1900, the railroad reached Whitehorse in the Yukon, and the company instituted a system of river boats and lake steamers to Dawson and Atlin in the gold country. More intrepid tourists continued down the length of the Yukon River to St. Michael on the Arctic Coast and then over to Nome. At this time, most of the population of Alaska lived along the coast; in 1900 there were only 63,592 people in the whole territory. The largest towns were Juneau, Nome and Skagway, all built by gold.

White Pass & Yukon Railroad brochure.
Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

A new area to tour was the southwestern coast where excursionists could book passage on freighters like those run by the Northwestern Steamship Company and Alaska Commercial Company. Alaska Coast Company, among others, ran the Prince William Sound Cruises. They stopped at Yakutat, Cordova, Valdez and Seward, and sometimes Seldovia and Anchorage. Tourists could escape the coast, at least for a short distance, on the Copper

Copper River and Northwest Railroad, Cordova.
ASLHC PCA 44.2.69

Alaska Steamship Company map. ASM 2002.7.1

Richardson Highway Transportation Company.
ASLHC PCA 44.6.213

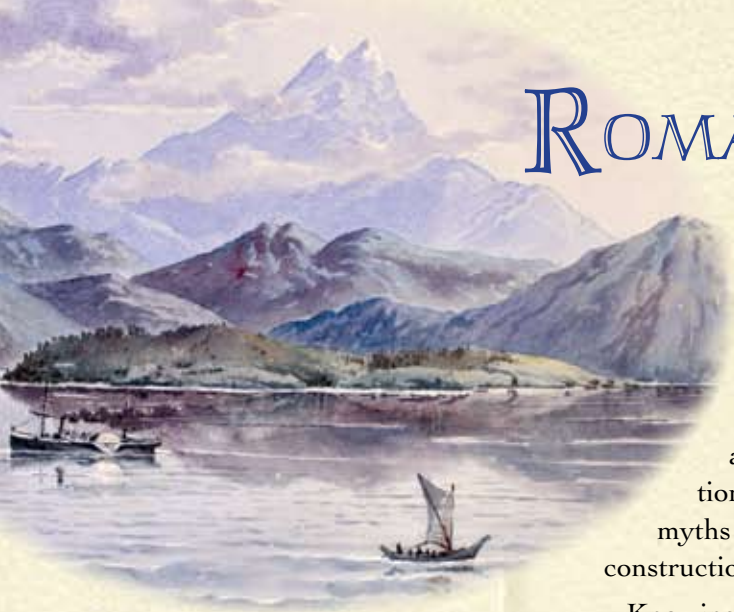
River & Northwest Railroad from Cordova to Chitina. By 1916 they could connect by auto stage to the unpaved Richardson Highway and continue to Fairbanks, staying at roadhouses along the way.

Providing amenities for tourists became a priority for Alaska transportation companies before World War I and the WP&YR converted many of its standard coaches into parlor cars, remodeled their dining rooms and added fresh fruit. In 1915, the White Pass excited tourists with its Midnight Sun Excursion boat from Whitehorse to Fort Yukon, which crossed the mythic Arctic Circle and almost 40 percent of its passenger revenue came from visitors. (Norris 1987: 6,7) The income generated for Alaskans by the early tourist trade was meager before World War I. Few jobs were created, and the excursionists spent most of their time and money on the boats. "Alaskan development boosters, such as local chambers of commerce and government officials, reciprocated by almost totally ignoring the existence of the industry….Besides the residents of this frontier area felt a certain arms-length skepticism about the pleasure-seeking class."[5] The growing curio trade added modest, but important, income for shop owners and Native inhabitants. Tourism did bring attention to the neglected territory that many hoped would translate into political action for sorely-needed local governance.

With better and more reliable transportation available, Alaska tourism was on the verge of major expansion. The future was foretold by Henry Gannett, a geographer on the 1899 Harriman Expedition to Alaska. In a National Geographic article of May 1901, he predicted that "[t]he Alaska coast is to become the show-place of the earth and pilgrims, not only from the United States, but from far beyond the seas, will throng in endless procession to see it." He believed that the grandeur of Alaska "measured by direct returns in money received from tourists, will be enormous" but the scenery "is more valuable than gold or the fish or the timber, for it will never be exhausted."[6]

Helen Vail's Roadhouse.
ASLHC PCA 44.06.217

Romancing the North



Theodore Richardson. Southeast Landscape, detail of watercolor.
ASM V-A-344

"There is an invitation, a lure, in the silent and austere balsam-scented immensity. Tourists we may be, walking the decks of a 'Princess' steamer on a tourists' trip, but we share the curiosity, surging along this coast, not only of the gold-seekers who came this way only yesterday, so to speak, but Captain Vancouver and all the other entranced early voyagers who reconnoiter along here wondering what next they might see. . . . It is a land of mystery and contrast." [1]

Canadian Pacific Railway Company brochure, 1931

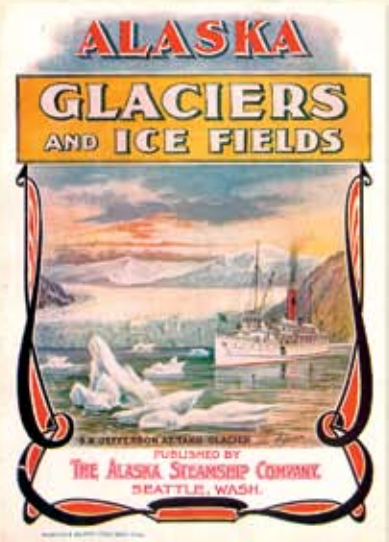
By the middle of the nineteenth century, dramatically illustrated books and magazines primed the public for travel to Alaska. The well-publicized newspaper accounts of Sir John Franklin's ill-fated northern expedition kept readers spellbound. Alaska offered plenty of the myths and fantasies that "play an usually large role in the social construction of all travel and tourist sights." [2]

Knowing that tourists like to see and read about where they are going before they get there, transportation companies produced a mountain of appealing travel brochures with the newest advertising methods at the turn of the nineteenth century. Early promoters deliberately chose images that resonated with the personal and nationalistic ideas Americans already had of themselves. However, one of the primary ingredients of tourist-appeal was provided by the tourists themselves—their imagination. This capacity to imagine both fostered the development of early tourism and created some of its most stubborn problems.

Ah! Wilderness

After two centuries of "taming" the wilderness across the continent, Americans no longer viewed it as a real threat but as the cradle of their unique culture and character. Wilderness was looked upon as an asset, a place full of promise that offered a chance for rejuvenation and transformation. Of all the reasons tourists come to Alaska, "the essential explanation…since its beginning is its wildness." [3] As late as 1980 a Maine newspaper editorial expressed this idea during the congressional debate over Alaska lands: "Alaska is our ultimate wilderness, the last remnant of what the New World used to be. If we lose the freshness and the beauty there, something essential to North America will have died out forever." [4]

In the nineteenth century, glaciers in Alaska were compared to frozen Niagaras and they became one of Alaska's biggest draws. Tourists scrambled up and over their crevasses, camped



Alaska Glaciers and Ice Fields, *Alaska Steamship Company booklet, 1906.*

Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

near their faces and described them in picturesque prose. "There is no air so indescribably, thrillingly sweet as the air of a glacier on a fair day. It seems to palpitate with a fragrance that ravishes the senses … and to behold the splendid, perpendicular front of a live glacier rising out of a sea which breaks everlastingly upon it…to see and hear tower, minaret, dome, go thundering down into the clear depths and pound them into foam—this is worth the price of a trip to Alaska." [5]

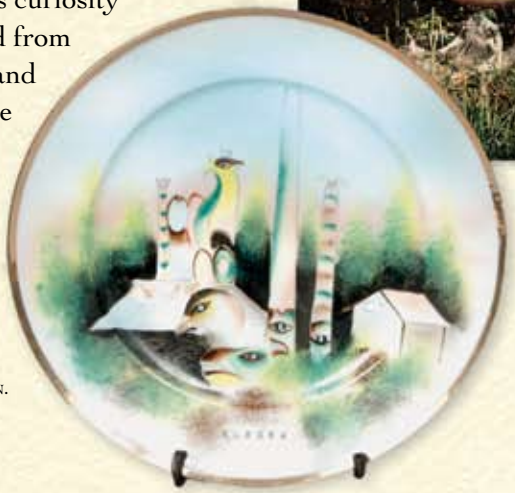
Mighty rivers like the Yukon offered tourists another epic journey that heightened their awareness. "Better to dare, to risk all and lose all… than never to know the surge of this lonely river of mystery…. No one can even tread the deck of a Yukon steamer and be quite so small and narrow again as he was before. The loneliness, the mystery, the majesty of it, reveals his own soul to his shrinking eyes, and he grows—in a day, in an hour, in the flash of a thought—out of his old self…." [6]

Totem Pole Land

By the 1890s, tour companies doing business in Alaska appropriated the totem pole to be an iconic promotional image. Large carved and painted poles were notable features along the waterfront of Southeast Native villages. Victorian tourists made special efforts to view them because they were deemed authentic manifestations of a vanishing race of Native Americans. Steamship companies competed vigorously to attract tourists by the promise of seeing these exotic monuments. "…in the museum the totem pole is simply a curiosity, something odd and with little meaning. But in Alaska, the home of the totem-pole, where it is a part of the home life of the natives, its meaning is soon learned and one's curiosity is changed to admiration." [7] Actual poles were removed from Native villages and erected in front of curio stores up and down the Northwest Coast. Model totem poles have been carved by the hundreds, and they have never gone out of favor as a tourist souvenir.

Model totem poles. FROM LEFT: *wood totem, Joe Tassel, Sr.,* ASM 2002.16.18; *wood totem* ASM II-B-1218; *kit,* ASM 99.15.5; *ivory totem,* ASM 98.21.1; *wood totem, Eli Tait,* ASM II-B-1731; *bone totem,* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR; *wood totem,* II-B-1220; *wood totem, Frank James,* ASM II-B-1965; *kit,* ASM 97.19.1.

ABOVE: *"Indian Graves and Totems" postcard, mailed 1913.* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR.



RIGHT: *Souvenir plate hand-painted in Japan.* COLLECTION OF MAVIS IRENE HENRICKSEN/RON KLEIN.

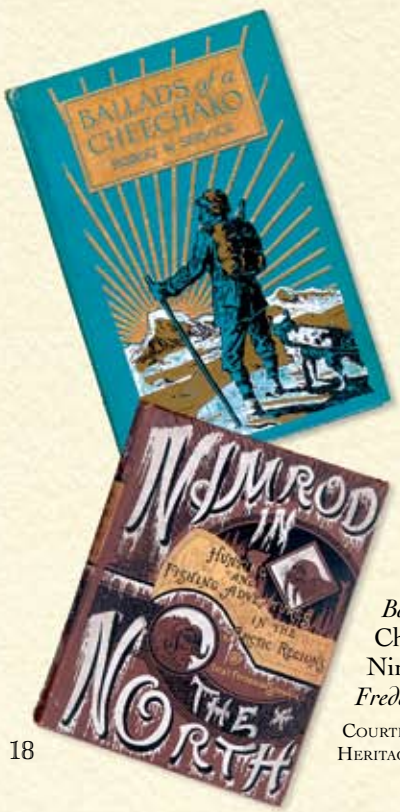
Kivetoruk Moses. East Cape Siberian Eskimo Dancers, watercolor and ink.
ASM V-A-538

Winter and Pond advertising card.
ASLHC PCA 117.121

Calling the Wild

The vogue for travel writing at the end of the nineteenth century coincided with the rise of tourism. People seemed compelled to write the story of their journey, and women were frequent writers. Eliza Ruhumah Scidmore, a famed travel author, filled her guidebooks with vivid descriptions and sharp opinions. Her 1894 article "Goat Hunting at Glacier Bay, Alaska" recounted staying for weeks in John Muir's cabin on the beach with seven pleasure seekers, including the artist Theodore Richardson. The North was often portrayed as a testing ground for the brave and hardy. Jack London's 1903 book, *Call of the Wild*, was read by millions and popularized the wilderness adventure. The widely-read poetry of Robert Service burned images in the reader's mind of men frozen to death in the Land of the Midnight Sun. Cheap pulp magazines of the 1920s-1940s featured Alaska adventures where "The Angel," one detective with a Tlingit sidekick, solved "The Totem Pole Murders." Travel literature, from explorer Frederick Schwatka's *Nimrod of the North* (1885) to John McPhee's bestseller *Coming into the Country* (1977), has continued to stir the curious to visit Alaska.

The landscape of Alaska attracted innumerable artists to capture its sublime grandeur and to affirm the presence of the Almighty there. Prominent American artists such as Albert Bierstadt, Rockwell Kent and Lockwood de Forest painted in Alaska. Native life also became the subject of camera and brush. The photographic team of Lloyd Winter and Percy Pond documented Tlingit culture for almost fifty years. Resident painters who gained local and national fame included Sydney Laurence, Francis Brooks Davis, Jules Dahlager and Eustace Ziegler. Native artists portrayed their surroundings in a variety of media, and offered them in forms suitable for the tourist market. After World War I, George Ahgupuk, Florence Malewotkuk and James Kivetoruk Moses illustrated Eskimo life that appealed to tourists. All these artists sold their work through souvenir stores.



Bookcovers: Ballads of a Cheechako, *Robert Service.* Nimrod in the North, *Frederick Schwatka.*
Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

RIGHT: *"North to Alaska" movie poster.* ASM 98.42.1

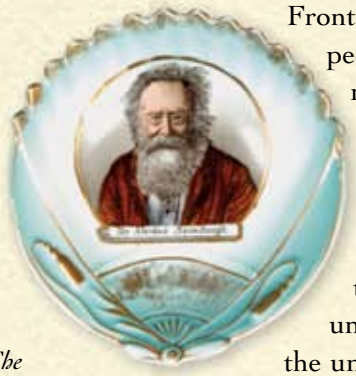
Soapy Smith's Museum

Jefferson "Soapy" Smith in his Skagway bar. ASLHC PCA 279.1.9

ABOVE LEFT: *"Soapy Smith's Museum" sign.* COLLECTION OF GEORGE AND EDNA RAPUZZI, PHYLLIS BROWN EXECUTOR.

LAST FRONTIER CHARACTERS

The idea of Alaska as the Last Frontier has popular appeal that dates back to the beginning of Alaska tourism. The Last Frontier was, and still is, a romanticized rough and tumble place peopled with rugged archetypes. A badman, a thrifty pie-making hotel owner, a backwoods artist, and an Indian "princess" are some of the characters of Alaska's Last Frontier tourism.



"The Alaskan Sourdough" souvenir dish. COLLECTION OF CANDY WAUGAMAN.

The Klondike Gold Rush lured Colorado fugitive and experienced con artist Jefferson "Soapy" Smith to the boom town of Skagway. He became the town's uncrowned king—running crooked card games, swindling the unsuspecting, and terrorizing the unfortunate with his gang of toughs. A vigilante party tried to scare him out of town in 1898, but only his death in a shoot-out brought his reign to an abrupt and violent end. "Soapy" became a fixture in Skagway tourism and lives on as a "bad guy" frontier-town stereotype.

Harriet Pullen came to Skagway about the same time as "Soapy." She began as a cook for the stampeders, and with their reshaped discarded tins and dried apples she made enough apple pies to buy steamer passage for her three sons and her horses. Later on she ran a freight business on the White Pass trail, and with her profits Pullen bought a huge house that she converted into an elegant hotel—the Pullen House. The rush of stampeders passed and Skagway's population dropped from about 9,000 to 490 by 1930, making the Pullen House unprofitable. Pullen died in 1947 but her plucky pioneer spirit reaffirms to tourists, especially women, that the frontier had its heroines too.

Many Victorian travel accounts of Sitka describe Tlingit trader Emeline Baker, fancifully known as "Princess Thom." Her Tlingit name was Kaajint and she dressed as a walking advertisement for her trading business "in her costume of yellow kerchief, pink waistcoat, magenta shawl, white stockings, and purple parasol."[8] She was the "highest authority in all mercantile questions. By having accumulated a fortune of ten thousand dollars by her shrewd and practical management has

ABOVE: *Pullen House, Skagway postcard.* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR.

Pullen House business card. COURTESY OF MAXINE SELMER.

"Princess Thom" c. 1896. RBCM, PN-1533

Devilish figure made by William Yanert at "Purgatory." Yanert secretly manipulated the devil's arm to wave at Yukon River steamboat tourists who stopped by his cabin.
UAFRL Elizabeth H. Goddard Collection, Yanert Papers 65.5.3.

she won this high distinction. Not only does she conduct a successful business at home but makes long journeys in her canoe to distant ports buying whatever merchandise she can dispose of to advantage."[9] "Princess Thom" overcame racial discrimination and became one of the most successful female Native entrepreneurs.

Another picturesque character was William Yanert, who first came to Alaska as an army surveyor in the 1890s. After retirement from the Army in 1903, he settled along the Yukon River 100 miles north of Fairbanks, staying there forty years and enduring 60 degree below zero winter temperatures. At his cabin property he named Purgatory, "Where the world's mad clamor knocks in vain, And is laughed to scorn by solitude," Yanert trapped, hunted, wrote poetry and made art while his brother kept him company. The steamboat tourists who came ashore delighted in his harmless pranks, cultured manners and genial spirit. Yanert's wit and wry philosophic comments on life enlivened his art and poetry that he shared with good friends and tourists alike.

William Yanert (left) and his brother Herman in front of their cabin at "Purgatory" along the Yukon River, c. 1930s.
UAFRL Fabian Carey Collection, Yanert Papers Box 2, Folder 33.

William Yanert moose antler carvings: woman with pitchfork, MNUAF 07680-0005; *Man and dog,* MNUAF 07680-0002.

On Exhibit

Perceived as "children of nature," Natives of Alaska became fascinating, romanticized objects for observation and thus a subject for tourist marketing. "Nineteenth-century notions of history were defined by the Euro-American belief that only White people had history. This belief excluded Aboriginal people from history and appointed them instead to the realm of nature. To nineteenth-century tourists, Aboriginal people …were part of the natural wonders that spurred the boom in late-nineteenth-century western tourism."[10] In a variety of ways, voluntary or involuntary, Native Alaskans were drawn into the realm of tourism.

Two large-scale venues that promoted Alaskan tourism were museum exhibits and world fair displays. European and American museums had scrambled at the end of the nineteenth century to collect Northwest Coast Native artifacts. (cf. Cole 1985) Thinking these indigenous cultures could

Eskimo Village on the Paystreak at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Seattle, 1909. UWL neg. X1766
The exposition's daily program advertised Eskimo performances in canoeing, dancing, singing and seal catching.

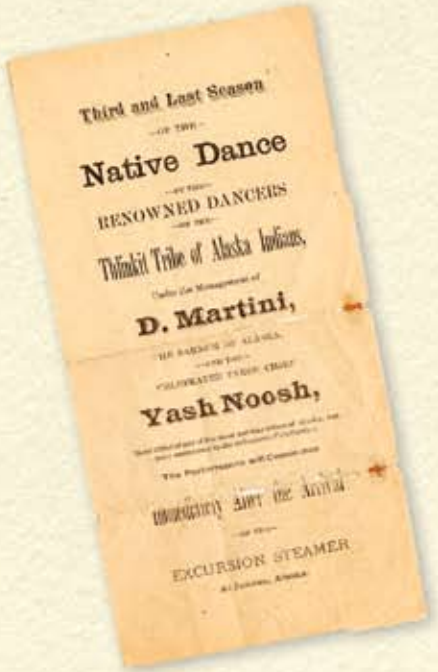
Alaska artifacts collected as souvenirs. Alaska State Museum Collection. from left: *Athabascan caribou skin bag,* II-C-71; *Eskimo wood snuff box,* II-A-4666; *NW Coast halibut hook,* II-B-789; *Eskimo ulu,* II-B-6750; *NW Coast berry basket,* II-B-318.

not withstand the march of progress, collectors shipped artifacts by the boatload to museums and expositions, where they were viewed as evidence of an authentic, vanishing past rather than of a living tradition. Twelve world fairs were held in America from 1876 to 1916, and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair was the first to display Aboriginal people. Thousands of tourists visited these "exotic" living attractions and together with museum exhibits they reinforced imperialist attitudes and fed the desire for collecting Indian curios.

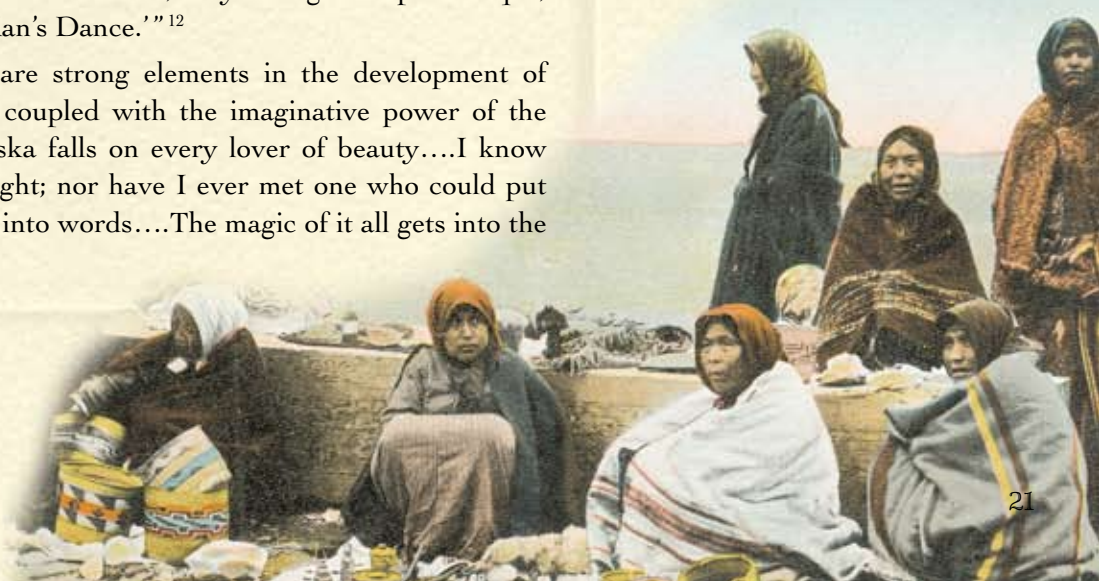
In Alaska, Native people were always on display. In the "curio line" along the waterfront, Native sellers were viewed as specimens. Even in their own homes, Natives were exposed to the voyeuristic gaze of White tourists who thought nothing of walking into their houses uninvited. Tourists were encouraged "to poke your way into the countless huts and igloos in search of the rare and curious relics."[11] Indians were rewarded for staying "authentically primitive" by tourists and anthropologists; however, they were not treated as real, multifaceted individuals participating in contemporary life. (Gordon 1988: 5)

Sometime in the late 1880s, D. Martini, a Juneau entrepreneur, realized that tourists' curiosity about Native culture might pay. For one dollar admission, tourists could attend an Indian dance performance organized by Martini. "We were seated on boards and benches, in the middle of a medium sized tent. At last, Yash Noosh, the chief, in a checked suit of brownish tint, and a straw hat, gave the signal, and the curtain was drawn aside. About half a dozen Indians in brilliant paint, with Chilcat blankets and feather head-dresses, with numberless ermine tails hanging down behind, and queer war spears, began…keeping time to a queer melancholy chant….these dances, very strange and picturesque, ended with a 'Medicine Man's Dance.'"[12]

Myth and illusion are strong elements in the development of tourism, especially when coupled with the imaginative power of the tourist. "The spell of Alaska falls on every lover of beauty….I know not how the spell is wrought; nor have I ever met one who could put the miracle of its working into words….The magic of it all gets into the blood."[13]



above: *"Native Dance," D. Martini brochure, Juneau.*
Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.



"Alaskan Indian Merchants" postcard.
Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

Made in Alaska?

Why would someone rush ashore at 10:30 at night in the rain to buy a souvenir? Just what are souvenirs and what, if anything, do they mean? Since at least the fourteenth century, European travelers have felt the need to acquire and save them. "Although the type of mementos may have changed through the years, they all have served as cues by which travelers have been able to relive their vacation experiences. They became a way to demonstrate that vacationers left their ordinary lives behind for a time and were transported into the realm of the extraordinary."[2] Other souvenirs are purchased and sent as gifts which may carry many messages. A souvenir, though a single object, is enough to represent a whole experience. Souvenirs may be totally worthless, yet be extremely valuable to the owner because of what they symbolize. Their need and importance on many levels is reflected in the amount of money spent on them in U.S. gift shops during 1981—$23 billion.

"We arrived at Wrangell in the rain at 10:30 P.M. There was a grand rush on shore to buy curiosities and see totem poles. The shops were jammed and mobbed, high prices paid for shabby stuff manufactured expressly for the tourist trade. Silver bracelets hammered out of dollars and half dollars by Indian smiths are the most popular articles, then baskets, yellow cedar toy canoes, paddles, etc." [1]

John Muir, 1879

The Craze for Collecting

In the eighteenth century, American souvenir collections were displayed in a space set aside in the parlor called a cabinet of curiosities. The status and worldliness of the collector were on display as well. Eventually collectors amassed enough of these oddities to open their cabinets to the public as "museums." These treasure troves of the exotic consisted of natural specimens intermingled with "artificial" man-made objects from anywhere in the world. Toward the end of the nineteenth century no home of the privileged or the growing middle class was considered complete without exotic decorations. "…the latest fad is an Indian room, that is, a room in which all the decorations are articles of Indian manufacture…. [they] must be the plunder of an individual trip or the souvenirs brought by friends who have visited Alaska [or] Mexico…"[3]

Southeastern Alaska was especially rich with potential collectible material because among Native cultures "[t]here was a clear regard for material objects; in fact, [their] chief aim was to display and conspicuously consume goods…. Rank, status, and lineage

RIGHT MID PAGE: *Sketch from Emily Carr's* "Alaska Journal." RBCM I-67766. *Carr, at right, satirizes herself and her sister as typical tourists loaded down with souvenirs. They carry hide bags with deer toes similar to the one on the right.*

RIGHT: *Deer hide bag with toes.* ASM II-B-72

UPPER LEFT CORNER: *Cover illustration from Alaska Steamship Company brochure.* Courtesy of Alaskan Heritage Bookshop. *Steamship companies often promoted Alaska with the use of generic Indian imagery, and this brochure features a Native curio dealer selling Southwest pottery.*

Feusi Hardware and Curio Store, Douglas.
JDCM 94.24.001

affiliation were symbolically denoted upon every tangible item…."[4] A trading tradition was long established among the indigenous peoples of Alaska before early eighteenth-century Russian explorers first encountered them. During Captain James Cook's Northwest Coast exploration in 1778, he was surprised to find silver articles of Western origin among the Indians who brought him items for sale. Alejandro Malaspina visited Yakutat Bay in 1791 and reported that as soon as the Natives "discovered the market for curios (figurines, spoons, daggers, boxes, etc.), the men and women began production."[5] By 1815, "the production of cultural artifacts made specifically for the souvenir trade had become an important adjunct to the sea otter trade" and the choice of items to be traded was made almost exclusively by the Natives.[6]

Alaska Natives entered the wage economy in the late nineteenth century by working as food suppliers, cannery workers or miners, and they were as desirous of the White man's goods as the tourists were eager for the handiwork they produced. "Having always been interested in acquiring exotic foreign goods to serve as markers of status within their own community, the Tlingits were quick to develop a taste for American household furnishings and clothing," for which they were willing to trade or sell their outmoded everyday items and heirlooms.[7]

Native Souvenirs

Natives entered the souvenir market and exploited it to their own advantage, both culturally and economically. The demand for their crafts resulted in a Native cottage industry throughout the territory. "The constantly increasing tourist travel during the summer has created a demand at all the steamer ports for hammered silver ware, basket-works, and various curios of native manufacture which they are able to sell at almost any price."[8] Women tourists were the most frequent buyers and Native women were the primary sellers. The Tlingit of Southeast Alaska were known as hard bargainers unwilling to reduce their prices because of pride in their craft and a clear understanding of supply and demand.

Cabinet card. U.S. Indian School, Ketchikan.
UAFRL Drawbaugh Collection, Box 2 Folder Misc. 98.016.05

Athabascan beaded purse. ASM II-C-259

Miniature (model) souvenirs. Alaska State Museum Collection. at back: *kayak, UA/UC.* from left: *Tlingit wood canoe and paddle,* II-B-1374ab; *basket,* 92.2.164d; *Eskimo drum,* II-A-6335; *NW Coast dance paddle,* II-B-1068; *Tlingit totem pole, John Jackson,* II-B-1968; *Eskimo wood sail boat, Carl Iyakitan,* II-A-5528; *Eskimo snow shoes,* II-A-7290; *totem pole, Tom Wolfe,* III-O-835; *Eskimo cache,* II-A-1845; *Athabascan bark canoe,* II-C-269; *Eskimo jawbone sled, Abraham Howarth,* II-A-6323; *Tlingit basket,* II-B-395; *basket,* II-B-1939.

Alaska church missions entered into the tourist market by giving tours of their facilities to encourage donations, and by producing souvenirs. The Presbyterian mission's Sitka Industrial Training School encouraged students to make souvenir "knock-down" furniture in 1885. The Indian students at the government schools in Ketchikan and Hoonah produced bird-houses, toy paddles, model totem poles, stools, benches, and cupboards for the 1910s souvenir market.

Arctic Souvenirs

Arctic whaling ships collected Aleut and Eskimo artifacts, and model kayaks were made explicitly as souvenirs as early as the 1790s. Ivory carvings became highly collectible, and among the many talented Eskimo artists it was Angokwazhuk, or "Happy Jack," who came to be called "King of the Eskimo Carvers." He is credited with introducing new types of souvenirs, including the billiken. This odd figure was the invention of a Kansas City art teacher in 1908. It became the "patron saint" of the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle and showed up in Nome as an ivory souvenir that same year. "Happy Jack" copied his first billiken from a plaster example, and by the thousands these figures have been constantly reproduced for the Alaska souvenir market. (cf. Ray 1996)

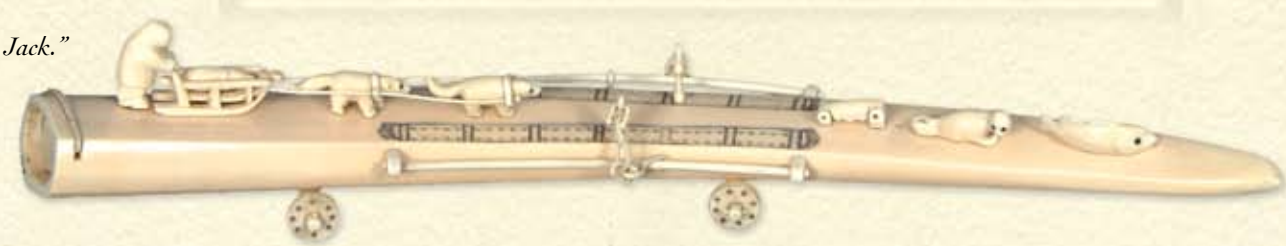
Billikens. Alaska State Museum Collection. from left: *Eskimo ivory,* 95.13.22; *Eskimo ivory,* II-A-7369; *ash tray/bank,* II-M-25; *ivory,* 99.9.2; *ivory,* II.A.3317.
The "good luck" billiken became closely associated with Alaska after it was introduced at the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle.

Because early travel to the Interior was limited, its curio market was much smaller compared to that of the southern Panhandle and the Arctic Coast. Trading posts along the Interior rivers supplied tourists with Athabascan birchbark baskets, quill-work embroidery and beadwork.

The March of Trade

The curio business was brisk by the late nineteenth century and all types were readily available in Sitka stores when Lady Jane Franklin came through in 1870. When money flowed in Skagway during the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush, Herman Kirmse made gold nugget jewelry and Peter Kern ran the Indian Curio Workshop to keep his store supplied

Ivory cribbage board.
Angokwazhuk, "Happy Jack."
ASM 98.7.213



LEFT: *Winter and Pond Curio Store interior, Juneau.* ASLHC PCA 87.995
Though primarily photographers, Lloyd Winter and Percy Pond did get into the souvenir business. ABOVE: *Hickok Trading Company, Juneau, 2006.*
PHOTO BY RON KLEIN, NORTHLIGHT STUDIO.

with the "real thing." The desire for souvenirs among gold seekers who stampeded to Nome in 1899 initiated a resurgence of ivory carving among the Eskimo. Stampeders to Fairbanks in 1902 inspired gold-rush-themed souvenirs made by expert jewelers such as John L. Sale, the "Tiffany of the North."

The variety of Alaska souvenirs and the network of suppliers greatly expanded just before World War I. Zenjiro Ikuta of Skagway was but one of the shop owners to develop and import Alaska-themed souvenirs from Japan. The H. H. Tammen Company of Denver was a big novelty supplier. Seattle was a major source for "Alaska" souvenirs and several companies operated there, sometimes employing Native Alaskans. Beginning in the gold rush era and continuing for decades, Mayer Brothers supplied large amounts of silver jewelry and souvenir spoons. During the 1910s, Herman Krupp's Alaska Fur Company also wholesaled "Alaska black diamond" (hematite), jade jewelry, and model wood totem poles to Alaska retailers. Well known for its gold nugget jewelry, the James L. Houston Manufacturing Company faked Eskimo carvings signed with the generic Eskimo-sounding name of Nuguruk or Nunuk. Longtime Krupp employee Karl Lemke mechanically etched them with Eskimo designs. The Houston company also hired the young Inupiaq Eskimo, Howard Weyahok Rock, to hand color etched ivory.

Birch bark card "Souvenir of Manley Hot Springs," 1947.
ASA RG 101, SERIES 130, BOX 544. FOLDER ADB 11.
Fred Zickwolff included his card in a note to Governor Ernest Gruening asking for help to develop a souvenir business.

Over the years, various attempts to produce souvenirs in Alaska have been made, with some success. In Juneau, Albert Berry produced handmade, custom metal pieces with Alaska-inspired designs in the Arts and Crafts tradition from 1913-1918. The first all-women corporation in the United States was formed to market garnets dug from ledges near Wrangell. "Home-grown" crafts using Alaska natural materials periodically enter the market as well.

Glacier bugs, made in Japan.
JDCM 2005.06.297

RIGHT: *Fireplace set, Albert Berry, Juneau, c. 1913-18.*
ASLHC PCA 87.2662

Baskets, woven and wrapped objects. Alaska State Museum Collection. from left: *Aleut basket,* II-F-119; *Tlingit basket,* II-B-376; *Tlingit goblet,* II-B-1836; *Tlingit flask,* II-B-553; *large Tlingit basket,* II-B-1696; *Tlingit basket,* 2003.35.1; *Athabascan basket,* II-C-110; *NW Coast bottle,* II-B- 552; *Eskimo basket, Agnes Smith,* II-A-5524; *Tlingit basket,* II-B-564; *NW Coast bottle,* II-B-579; *Eskimo letter holder, Ruth Lee,* 92.2.153; *birch bark basket,* II-A-4802.

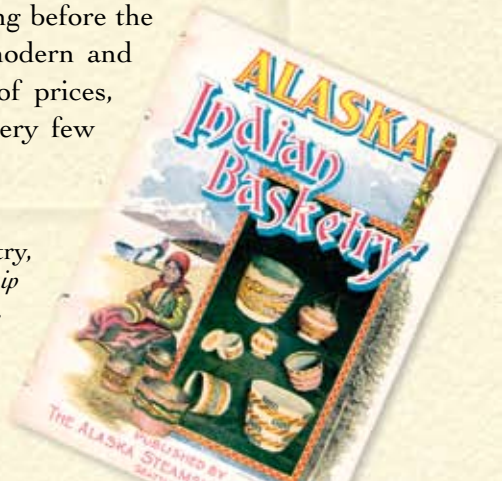
"Baskets and weavers, Attu Alaska." Courtesy of Richard Wood. *Women from Attu wove their highly-prized baskets from fine grass, and the zenith of their production was between 1890 and 1920.*

A Woven Teapot

Native art forms thrived and evolved under the demand of the tourist market and sometimes dormant traditions were revived. Many early souvenirs were copies of traditional objects no longer used. Reduction in scale is a characteristic of souvenir items and miniatures were made of almost everything. They were popular "suitcase-sized" souvenirs. Innovative carvings in the newly-worked black slate material, called argillite, were made by the Haida expressly for the foreign market by the 1820s, and they commanded considerable amounts of cash. (Kaufmann 1976:58) Sometimes souvenirs were copies or interpretations of Western objects, but in a totally different material, like a teapot woven out of spruce roots. The artistic leap of imagination by Native artists to change the context and meaning of an object by changing its medium and scale became humorous or ironic comment on the contemporary scene.

For a while the most popular of the Alaskan souvenirs was the basket, and steamship brochures advertised whole tours just for collecting these fragile objects: "[n]o home is complete now-a-days without a neat and artistically arranged Indian basket corner. The fad of collecting these beautifully woven gems…is one which is fast finding favor with those who journey northward."[9] Baskets were heavily collected because they "embodied the affiliation between Aboriginal people, nature, and the past that so many tourists expected to find in Alaska."[10] Nineteenth-century basket makers incorporated Western design motifs from clothing, carpets and curtains, using commercial aniline dyes, much to the chagrin of tourists. "The original chaste designs and symbols of Thlingit, Haidah, and Aleutian basketry are gradually yielding before the coarse taste of traders and tourist, to the more modern and conventional designs…."[11] Sold in a wide range of prices, baskets became scarce by the 1930s, and today very few weavers keep the art alive.

Cozy corner displaying Alaskan curios from Pacific Coast Steamship Company brochure, 1906. ASM 2006.2.1



Alaska Indian Basketry, *Alaska Steamship Company booklet, 1906.* Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

Silver souvenirs. FROM TOP LEFT: *potlatch-style spoon,* ASM 92.14.1; *wide bracelet,* SJM I-X-36; *4 commercially manufactured spoons,* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR; *narrow bracelet,* ASM 89.40.2; *Native engraved shovel bowl spoon and Rudolph Walton engraved spoon,* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR; *Native engraved spoon,* ASM 92.14.7; *Native engraved tortured witch spoon,* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR; *Tlingit design earrings, Lincoln Wallace,* ASM 89.40.3AB.

SEARCH FOR THE AUTHENTIC

The importance of authenticity has varied among tourists who collect both experiences and souvenirs. Early tourists seeking ethnic artifacts hoped to a combine an authentic buying experience with the purchase of an authentic souvenir. Purchase decisions were based on gender, class and taste. Baskets with evidence of use were highly sought after by sophisticated collectors. More casual "tourists sustained the weak fiction that the artifacts they bought were the same artifacts used by Indians."[12] Western-influenced souvenirs were seen as less authentic and valuable. "Buy the oldest and dirtiest bracelets you can find, if you buy bracelets, as you will surely be tempted to do…. Nowadays bracelets are meant to sell. The old designs are being replaced by American flags, E Pluribus Unum eagles, clasped hands and other borrowed atrocities."[13] The "high" prices charged by Aboriginal people were viewed by tourists as a sign of corrupting commercialization and lost innocence.[14] Few tourist/collectors based their purchases on the skill of the artist rather than the arbitrary levels of authenticity.

What was once considered degenerate and inauthentic Native-made tourist art is now being reassessed. Until recently, scholars, museum curators, anthropologists, and art collectors "rejected most commoditized objects as inauthentic on the grounds of their stylistic hybridity and their production for an external market."[15] This valuation of souvenirs influenced the perception of market-made objects and degraded them as less meaningful or original. Ethnic souvenirs are now seen as expressive objects that illuminate the histories and complex interactions between two cultures. [16]

One of the early successful Tlingit artists was Rudolph Walton of Sitka. He attended the Presbyterian-run Sitka Industrial Training School and after several occupations took up silversmithing to earn a living. By 1895 he was running his own business supplying tourists with engraved bracelets, paddles and souvenir spoons of his own design. Spoon collecting was all the rage,

BELOW: *Ivory and baleen souvenirs.* ALASKA STATE MUSEUM COLLECTION. FROM LEFT: *bracelet,* 2000.34.3; *puffin, Alvin Kayouktuk,* 98.7.5928; *seal, Lincoln Milligrock,* II-A-6001; *bow saw,* 98.7.218; *cormorant, John Kokuluk, Jr.,* II-A-5621; *walrus,* II-A-6191; *Will Rogers and Wiley Post Monument,* 98.45.9; *polar bear, Mike Saclamana,* II-A-5761; *caribou, Seymour Tuzroyluke,* II-A-6174; *musk ox, Robert Kokuluk,* II-A-5735; *baleen basket with ivory knob, Marvin S. Peter,* 98.45.15; *Donald Duck, Jonathon Johnson,* II-A-6718; *pick,* 98.7.165; *shovel,* 98.7.172; *auklet, Alvin Kayouktuk,* II-A-6008.

Haida argillite souvenirs. Alaska State Museum Collection. from left: *clock, Andrew Brown,* 91.15.5; *totem pole* II-B-1030; *tray, John Wallace,* II-B-1023.

and he had difficulty meeting the demand. Although silver was not a traditional material, silver objects were represented in the Chicago World's Fair as authentic Indian work.

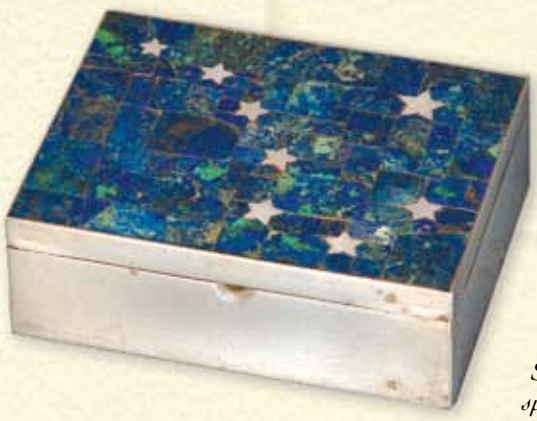
A new view of Native souvenir arts is summed up by Richard W. Hill of the National Museum of the American Indian. "Art made after contact is just as important to understanding as the ancient forms of expression. Each generation of Native peoples leaves its impressions about life through its art. As the circumstances around Native communities change, their art also changes. This is why Native art today is as legitimate as older work in presenting Native world views."[17] Today, Native Alaskans are working in ways that break the stereotypical Indian art mold. The tourist market continues to provide them with a venue where they may innovate from their past.

Steel engraved paperweight from the P. E. Kern curio store, Skagway, c. 1900. Courtesy of Mavis Irene Henricksen.

A Helping Hand

In 1937 the Bureau of Indian Affairs Alaska Native Service set up the wholesale Alaska Native Arts & Crafts Clearing House (ANAC) in Juneau to support Native artists. Another purpose was to educate the public about the difference between Alaskan Native hand-made crafts and machine processed imitations made outside Alaska. The program expanded the market to such an extent that it remained successful after it became the nonprofit cooperative, Alaska Native Arts and Crafts Cooperative Association, Inc., in 1956.

Governor Ernest Gruening realized the potential of tourism and in 1948 asked his old friend William Spratling to develop an enterprise similar to Spratling's successful silver workshop in Taxco, Mexico. The large workshop produced his distinctive designs based on indigenous Indian motifs. Spratling proposed a plan to train Alaska Native artists to produce high-quality decorative arts for the tourist/collector market, and several



Inlaid silver cigarette case, William Spratling, c. 1940s. ASM 91.15.2. *This is one of the prototypes Spratling made for a proposed government-sponsored Native Alaskan workshop program.*

RIGHT: *Mid-20th-century souvenirs.* FROM LEFT: *C. Allan Johnson ceramic figurines,* ASM V-D-16, ASM V-D-29; *painted wood totem pole,* ASM II-B-685; *ivory handled pickle fork signed Nuguruk, Matthew Adams painted ceramic tray, 49th State sugar bowl,* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR; *NW Coast wood salad set,* ASM II-B-924,925; *ceramic spoon rest, cup and saucer (made in Japan),* COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR; *NW Coast doll,* ASM II-B-1948; *Raven grease bowl, Amos Wallace,* ASM UA/UC-5.

Native Alaskans journeyed to Mexico for instruction. Spratling produced about 200 prototypes but the Alaska project never materialized.

As a reaction to the enormous quantity of faked Alaska souvenirs, the "Silver Hand" program that distinguished Native-made articles was initiated by the Alaska Division of Economic Enterprise in 1972. In 1974, the Federal Trade Commission brought suit against several Seattle manufacturers alleging they had misrepresented their goods, but the suit was thrown out. (cf. Ray 1996) A "Made in Alaska" program began using a distinct logo in 1986 to promote Alaska-manufactured souvenirs.

RIGHT: *"Silver Hand" logo,* COURTESY OF THE ALASKA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS; *"Made in Alaska" logo.* COURTESY OF THE ALASKA VISITORS CENTER, STATE OF ALASKA.

Glacier Smoothie Soap advertising card. COURTESY OF GLACIER SMOOTHIE SOAP.

MOOSE NUGGETS

Mass tourism of the late twentieth century brought the need for mass-produced souvenirs. Souvenirs are produced all over the world and stamped "Alaska." Contemporary shops are filled with items for every taste. Even moose droppings have found a niche and are made into earrings, swizzle sticks and ornaments. It no longer seems to matter if a souvenir is authentic by any definition, or whether it is made in Alaska. A representative token of Alaska seems to be enough.

Moosletoe holiday decoration. COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR.

Alaska Railroad, "The McKinley Park Route," c. 1920s. ASLHC PCA 44.05.074

See Alaska First

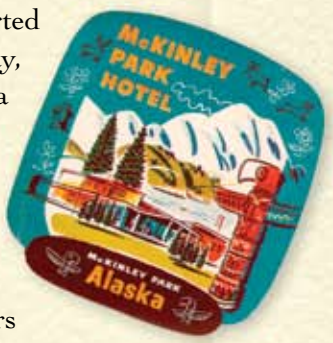
Alaska was still a territory when tourism expanded rapidly after World War I and again after World War II. Improved transportation and coordination of services were key to this increase, but a traveler still needed plenty of time, money and stamina. When new routes to the Interior were added, tourists spent more time inland, and a whole new set of demands were created. The typical tour from Seattle and return involved 4,481 miles and 23 days traveling by steamship, rail, and bus or car.

"Get more hotels with twin beds. …Make much of 'initiating' the newcomer into the Order of the Sourdoughs. The most frequent inquiry from people hearing about [our] trip is did you see any Eskimos?… [a] counterpart of the 'dude ranch' would go over. Have reindeer, have dog sleds, have Eskimos looking as native as possible — have it where there is some snow and people can brag about it when they get home." [1]

Alaska tourist survey, 1953

Railroading in Alaska

The steamship and railroads pooled their resources to offer more coordinated touring schedules. The Great Circle Tour started with a White Pass & Yukon Railroad train at Skagway, then down the Yukon River by steamboat, and finally via the Alaska Railroad south to the port at Seward. The Alaska Railroad was complete in 1923 and from Seward to Fairbanks it was advertised as "The McKinley Park Route." Tourists boarded at the coast, headed inland, stopped overnight at the Curry Hotel, and the next day rolled into Fairbanks. The train ridden by Christine Ayars on this route in 1922 had one passenger car and one baggage car. She lamented that the mosquitoes were so bad you couldn't open the windows in the summer heat. When the brakeman burned a powder at the rear of the car trying to kill them, she nearly suffocated. (Ayars 1922: 232) After World War II the railroad was able to upgrade service from Anchorage to Fairbanks. The blue and gold diesel streamliner AuRoRa took over the route in 1947.



McKinley Park Hotel sticker.

Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

Women tourists with mosquito netting. ASLHC PCA 44.05.217

Taku Lodge letterhead. ASA RG 314 Series 53

Nordale Hotel, Fairbanks, Alaska.
UAFRL 1989-0166-204

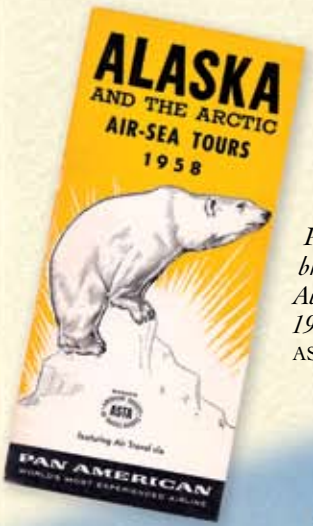
Finding a Place to Stay

Overnight arrangements were still a frustration for the tourist in the first decades of the twentieth century. Roadhouses were often primitive affairs and lodges were widely scattered. Fairbanks had the worst shortage of lodging, and overflow travelers stayed in private homes and in the local college dormitories. The Nordale Hotel, the largest in Fairbanks, had only one bathroom in 1922, but another was planned in anticipation of President Harding's visit. Even as late as 1952 the discontent over lodging was voiced. "My complaint was the Hotel at Fairbanks. [They] put a strange lady in our room after midnight, not asking our permission before, just simply unlocking our door," and "Get some decent hotels run by people with a civil tongue." [2]

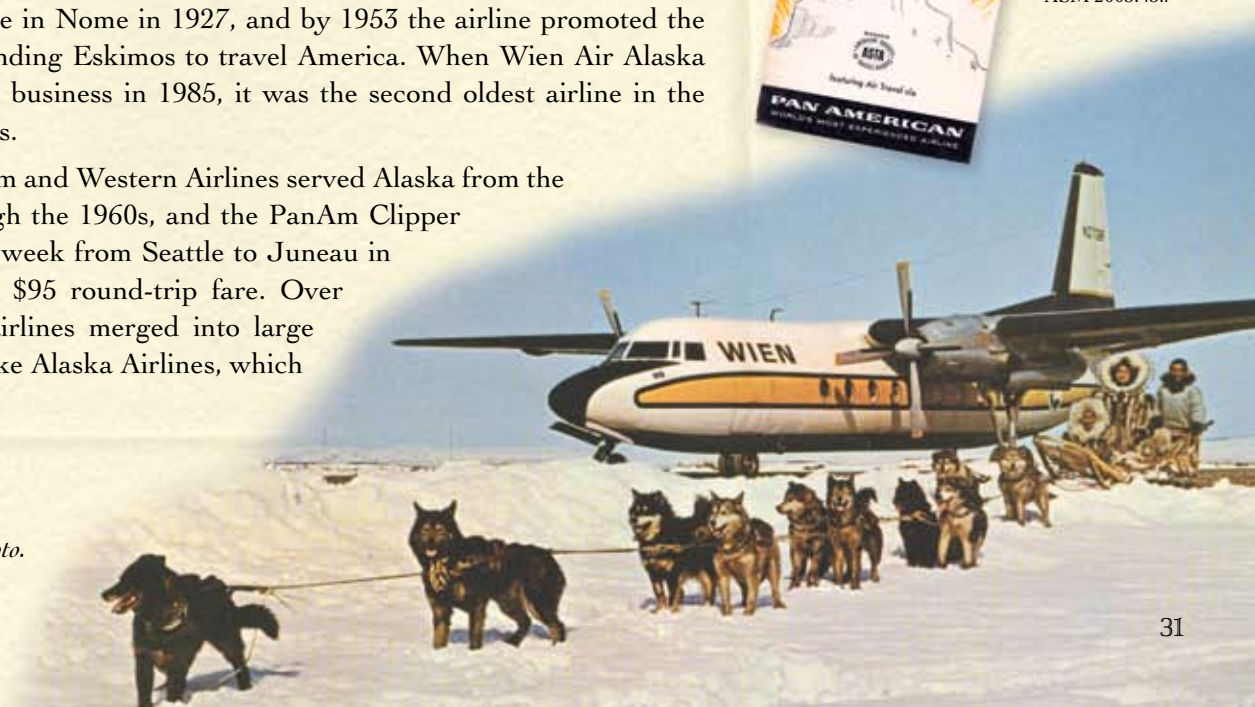
Sightseeing by Air and Sea

In the early twentieth century, numerous airlines pioneered flight service to and within Alaska. "Bush" pilots flew sightseers out of Anchorage and Fairbanks beginning in the 1920s and 1930s. Noel Wien started the first Alaska airline in Nome in 1927, and by 1953 the airline promoted the Arctic by sending Eskimos to travel America. When Wien Air Alaska discontinued business in 1985, it was the second oldest airline in the United States.

Pan Am and Western Airlines served Alaska from the 1940s through the 1960s, and the PanAm Clipper flew twice a week from Seattle to Juneau in 1940 with a $95 round-trip fare. Over time small airlines merged into large companies like Alaska Airlines, which



Pan American brochure, Arctic Air-Sea Tours, 1958.
ASM 2003.45.7



Wien Airlines promotional photo.
ASM 84.21

Wien Airlines promotional photo and decal. ASM 84.21

flew a Golden Nugget jet service from Anchorage to Nome and Kotzebue in 1965. Features of their two-day tour included a visit to a real Eskimo sod hut, seeing hunters bring in whale, seal and walrus on the beach, riding in a real umiak (skin-covered boat) or dogsled, plus watching traditional dances and the blanket toss.

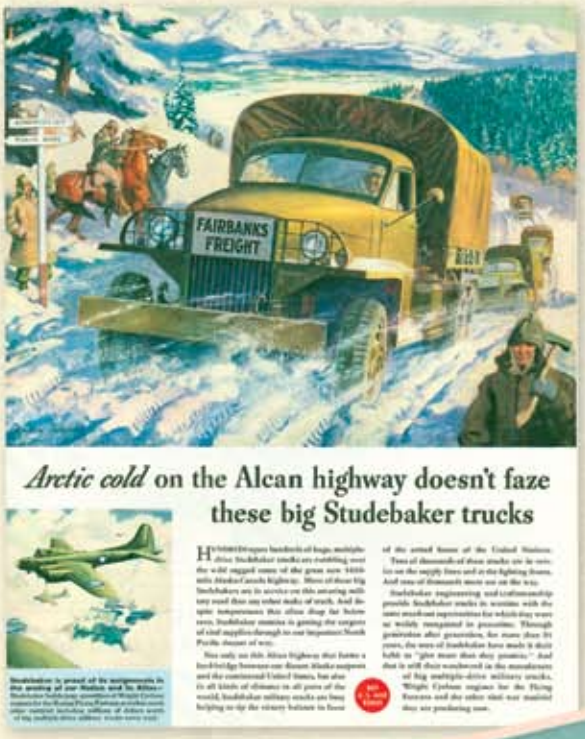
After working as a bush pilot and flying a few tourists for Wien Airlines in 1946, Chuck West founded Arctic Alaska Travel Service in Fairbanks. His offerings provided the first full-service air tours above the Arctic Circle. West established the rudiments of modern tourism by adding packaged services with a hotel chain, a motor coach line and modern small-ship cruises. The steamship passenger business faltered after the war, and in 1954 the Alaska Steamship Company ceased passenger service. A few Canadian ships continued to serve the Inside Passage. West added to the cruise ship inventory, and his Alaska Cruise Lines (now CruiseWest) helped sustain the Alaska excursion industry.

In 1963, the Alaska Marine Highway ferry service became a no-frills travel option for tourists. Service to Seattle, Washington was provided in 1967. New ships were added with the prediction that a second Klondike Gold Rush would result. Beginning with the 1,000-passenger *Columbia* launched in 1974, the ferries grew larger with more staterooms and other amenities.

ABOVE: *Wien Airlines promotional sealskin swimsuit,* ASM III-M-47. *Wien employees took this swimsuit to the national trade shows they attended in the 1960s.*

Alaska Marine Highway brochure. ASM 2001.51.1.

LEFT: *Wien Airlines promotional photo of their specially constructed Arctic tundra mobile.* ASM 84.21



Studebaker Motor Company ad, Collier's *magazine.* ASM 2000.22.1

A Road to Alaska

Building a road to Alaska began in 1942 when World War II shook the nation into action. Epic stories of road construction were dramatized in popular magazines. A New York Times want ad summarized the hazards that a worker would have to face. "Men will have to fight swamps, rivers, ice and cold; mosquitoes, flies and gnats [that] will not only be annoying but will cause bodily harm. If you are not prepared to work under these and similar conditions DO NOT APPLY."[3] With the opening of the Alaska-Canadian Highway (Alcan) to the general public in 1948, the 1,523-mile gravel road became an opportunity for personal adventure. The public absorbed the mythic image of the road, and many decided to take on the motoring challenge as imagined "pioneers."

Federal planning of roadside facilities began even before the war ended, and a 1944 study outlined anticipated needs, including 100 viewpoints and interpretive signs. Lodging, restaurants and fueling stations would be 35 miles apart, but until that time only people who "are versed in life away from material comforts, familiar of the sleeping bag, and who know how to stock and use grub-boxes" were advised to attempt the drive. (cf. Drury 1944) Roadside development changed the reality of the highway as a remote route through the wilderness. However, its symbolic meaning remains in the minds of travelers. Even for those in expensive motor homes, it represents the American values of rugged individuality, mobility and freedom.

World War II era postcard. ASM 2000.28.02. *A large number of souvenirs were produced for the military stationed in Alaska during the war.*

O'Harra Bus Lines ad from Jacobin's Guide to Alaska, *1946.*

Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop.

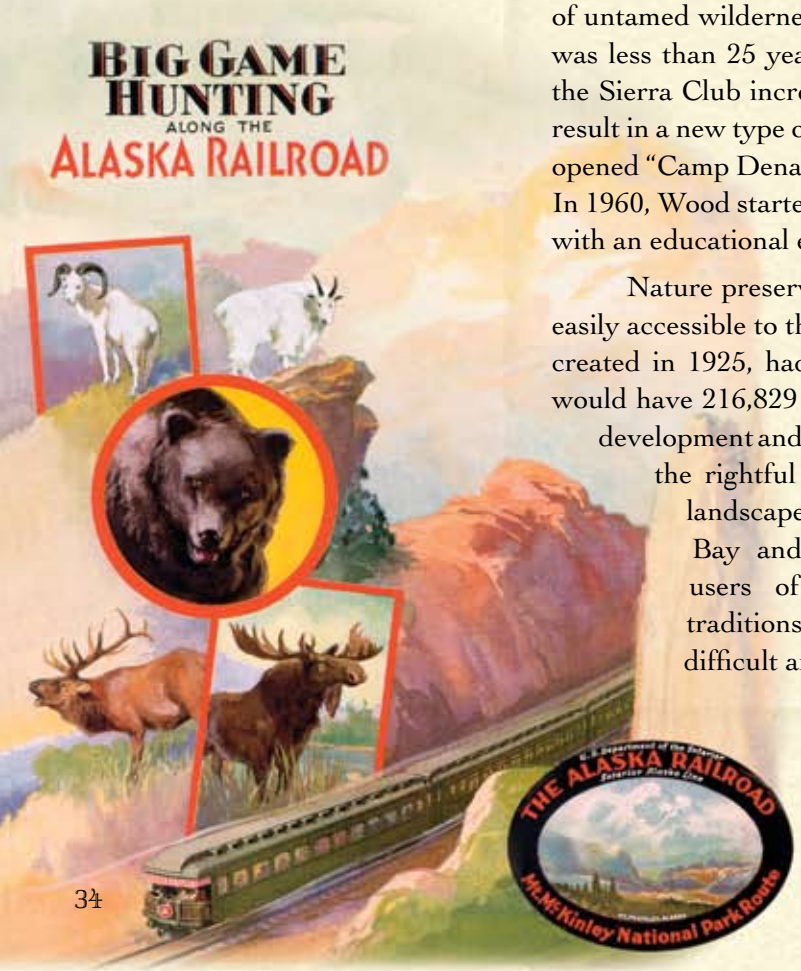
ABOVE: *Reeve Aleutian Airways ad from* Jacobin's Guide to Alaska and the Yukon, *1954.*
COURTESY OF THE ALASKAN HERITAGE BOOKSHOP.

FOR THE LOVE OF WILDERNESS

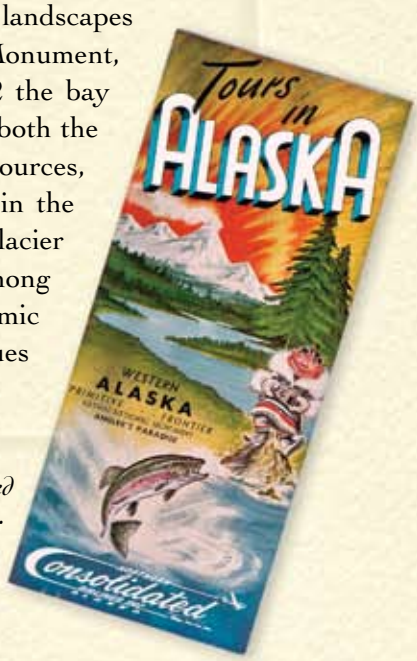
Big game hunting and fishing were early magnets for the tourist-sportsman and continue as a lucrative part of the tourism industry. The love of wilderness among an increasing number of visitors caused conflict between development and preservation in Alaska. Mt. McKinley National Park was founded in 1917 primarily as a wildlife refuge. The park, renamed Denali National Park in 1980, was also meant to preserve an "authentic" piece of the last frontier and to benefit the Alaska Railroad, the tourist industry and Alaska's economy. (Catton 1997:125) In 1923, the increased traffic allowed Dan Kennedy to open a tent camp at Savage River about 12 miles inside the park. Visitors came by horseback or wagon, and the first season 34 guests paid for the privilege of roughing it. By 1929, 50 tented cabins were available at $7.50 per night.

After the unprecedented prosperity and homogeneity of 1950s America, travelers wanted to find adventure and experience the sublimity of untamed wilderness. In this era, fifty percent of the U.S. population was less than 25 years of age. From 1960 to 1970 the membership of the Sierra Club increased from 10,000 to 100,000. These trends would result in a new type of Alaska tourism. Ginny Wood and Cecelia Hunter opened "Camp Denali" in 1952, launching organized adventure tourism. In 1960, Wood started "Tundra Treks," a 12 day backpacking adventure with an educational emphasis, the first of its kind in Alaska.

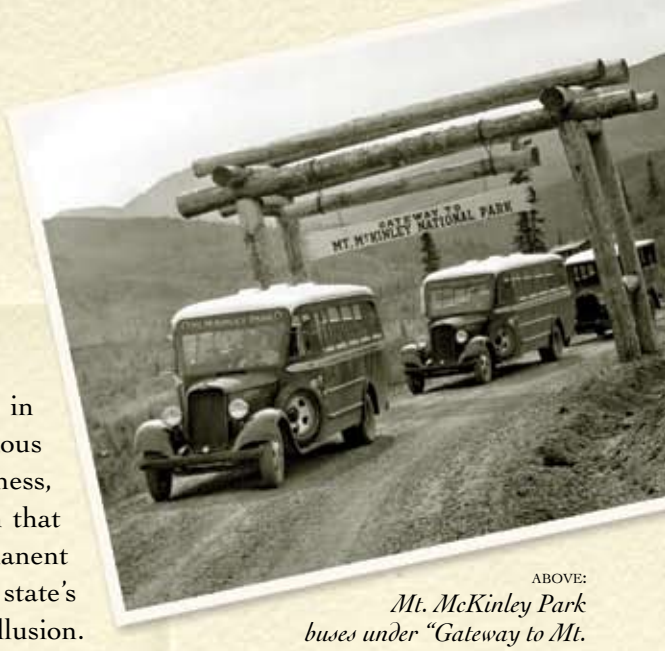
Nature preserves were intended to be beautiful landscapes easily accessible to the public. Glacier Bay National Monument, created in 1925, had 6,300 visitors in 1969; by 1992 the bay would have 216,829 visitors. With so much focus on both the development and preservation of Alaska's scenic resources, the rightful place of Aboriginal inhabitants in the landscape was lost. Balancing the use of Glacier Bay and other wilderness preserves among users of differing cultural and economic traditions made the resolution of these issues difficult and prolonged.



Alaska Railroad brochure, Big Game Hunting.
ASM 2003.25.1



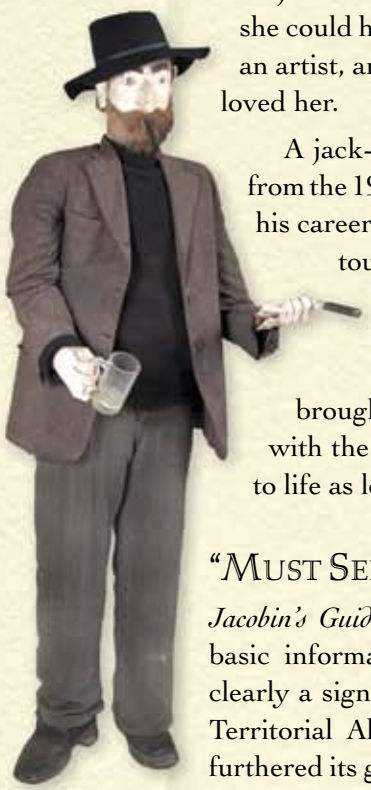
Northern Consolidated Airlines brochure.
ASM 2001.24.1



ABOVE:
Mt. McKinley Park buses under "Gateway to Mt. McKinley National Park" sign.
ASLHC PCA 44.05.002

A Last Frontier Forever

The idea of Alaska as the last frontier was still firmly fixed in tourists' minds in the 1950s. "For me the appeal of that glorious country was the lack of civilization and the primitive ruggedness, and to make any improvements would mar and detract from that appeal. I would like to see Alaska remain as it is—our last permanent frontier."[4] Promoting this idea remains important for the state's tourist industry even as it becomes increasingly a fabricated illusion. The early stagecoaches used at Mt. McKinley National Park were imported props providing generic frontier symbols. A "live" frontier icon, homesteader Fannie Quigley, lived near the park until 1944 and drew just as much attention as the great mountain. Barely five feet tall, she could hunt, kill, skin, and cache her own big game, embroider like an artist, and entertain like a queen at her tiny log cabin. The tourists loved her.



A jack-of-all-trades who enlivened the tourist scene in Skagway from the 1920s to the 1940s was Martin Itjen. By the time Itjen finished his career he was a tourist attraction himself. One of his customized tour cars featured a mechanized stuffed bear that waved and sported glowing eyes. His tour included several stops and an entertaining two-hour-long monologue about Skagway's Gold Rush days. A publicity stunt in 1935 brought Itjen and his streetcar to Hollywood and face-to-face with the flamboyant movie star Mae West. Skagway history came to life as long as Itjen gave his tours, which lasted until 1941.

ABOVE: *Martin Itjen with movie star Mae West, 1935.*
COLLECTION OF GEORGE AND EDNA RAPUZZI, PHYLLIS BROWN EXECUTOR.

"Must See" Alaska

Jacobin's Guide, *The Milepost* and *Alaska Sportsman* magazine provided basic information for early twentieth-century tourists. Tourism was clearly a significant part of the Alaska economy by the 1930s, and the Territorial Alaska Development Board, created in 1945, furthered its growth. From 1947 to 1953, General Manager George Sundborg worked to attract tourist operations to the territory and helped establish the Alaska Visitor's Association. Thousands of curious people from Alexandria,

BELOW: *Street car sign, "gold" watch chain and Martin Itjen's street car hat.*
COLLECTION OF GEORGE AND EDNA RAPUZZI, PHYLLIS BROWN EXECUTOR.

ABOVE: *Life size "Soapy" Smith automaton made by Martin Itjen.*
COLLECTION OF GEORGE AND EDNA RAPUZZI, PHYLLIS BROWN EXECUTOR.
Itjen restored Smith's saloon, and when tourists came through the door, the famed badman lifted his glass and then shot the card-playing figure of "Dangerous Dan."

Ketchikan Salmon Arch. ASLHC PCA 429.2

Egypt, to Omaha, Nebraska wrote him for information. "A school teacher in New Orleans asked if she should wear 'longies' aboard ship while cruising Alaska waters. A welder in Trenton wanted to fly above the Arctic Circle and across the International Dateline into tomorrow. A secretary in Los Angeles thought she would go husband hunting in the north and asked for particulars."[5] Two Alaskan artists, Fred Machetanz and Rie Muñoz, who later achieved wide recognition, worked for the board in the 1950s. Shortly after statehood in 1959, the new state of Alaska established a permanent Division of Tourism and Economic Development. By the late 1960s, the division was spending more per capita than any other state. A trade magazine named Alaska one of the "ten hottest new travel destinations of 1967."

That year, the division requested a federal study that outlined persistent problems: lack of accommodations, high cost of travel to the state, lack of developed attractions, and shortage of capital. In spite of this, 84,700 tourists visited Alaska in 1967, spending $25 million, and the industry ranked fourth in wages paid. The federal study made recommendations: the potlatch should become a tourist "must see" event, sourdough pancakes, Native foods and wild game should be available to dramatize the frontier image. Developing distinctive symbols, expanding year-round visits, and highlighting Mt. McKinley as North America's highest peak were practical suggestions. More historical attractions needed to be developed, especially those about Native culture. (cf. United States 1968) Many of these suggestions would be implemented and can be recognized today as typical themes in Alaska tourism.

Juneau's Gold Mine Tour and Hoochinoo 'n Hot Cakes brochure.

Collection of George and Edna Rapuzzi, Phyllis Brown executor.

Alaska Riverboat Excursions brochure.

Collection of the author.

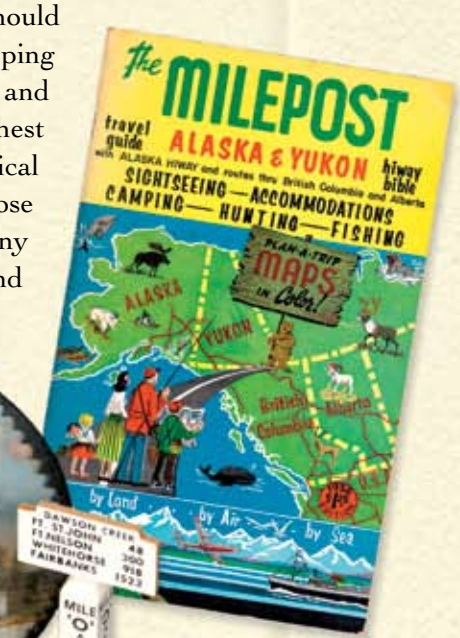
Chuck West started in the riverboat tour business on the Chena River in 1949 and soon sold the business to his young captain, Jim Binkley.

left: *Alaska Airlines brochure, House of Wickersham.*

Collection of George and Edna Rapuzzi, Phyllis Brown executor.

above: *Souvenir of the Alaska Highway wall plaque.*

Collection of Candy Waugaman



above: The Milepost, *1958.* ASM 95.6.6. *The Milepost became the "bible" for travelers motoring in Alaska.*

right: *Milepost sign at the beginning of the Alaska Highway.* ASM 2003.22.1

THE COMING OF THE BIG SHIPS

When the Holland America Line's TV "Love Boat" arrived in Southeast Alaska waters in 1979, it signaled a sea-change for the Alaska tourist industry. The ability of large ships to navigate the Inside Passage made possible the mammoth scale of glamorous "world class" cruising to Alaska. Millions of viewers tuned in to the popular "Love Boat" series between 1977 and 1986. In the program's last season, Alaska hosted 700,000 vacationers. From now on tourism in Alaska would be on a scale that made the excursions of the past seem quaint. Jet planes and the Alaska Highway added to the influx of tourists never seen before.

The TV program was just one booster for Alaska tourism during this era. Construction of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline generated publicity and excitement similar to the early gold rushes. Controversy raged over the passage of the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) which created 23 wild and scenic rivers, 10 national parks and nine wildlife refuges. News coverage of this battle and appeals put out by conservation organizations put images of the Alaskan wilderness in every living room. The press focused on Alaskan lands as national treasures belonging to everyone. The state of Alaska began aggressive advertising and spent millions in marketing. Rapid changes would challenge the very heart of what tourists came to Alaska to see and experience.

"As an [Alaska] economist, I look at these economic impacts and the visitor numbers and ask: where was this money spent, how much stayed in Alaska, how much went into the pockets of small businesses in Alaska, how much was captured by communities, how much left the state almost immediately? These are all very important questions that we have not spent too much time considering in the past when tourism was in its infancy. We just wanted more visitors. . . ." [1]

Alaska Division of Tourism Director, Ginny Fay, 2000

RIGHT: *State of Alaska travel booklet.* ASM 96.41.3

ABOVE: *Collage of mega cruise ship with early steamer superimposed.* Photo collage by Ron Klein, Northlight Studio. *The earliest steamers to Southeast Alaska usually carried less than 300 excursionists; most cruise ships today carry over two thousand passengers.*

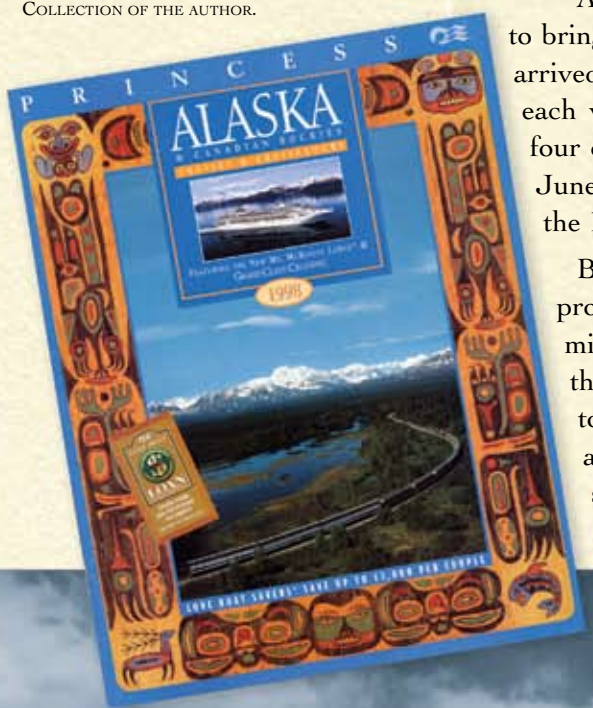
Going Global

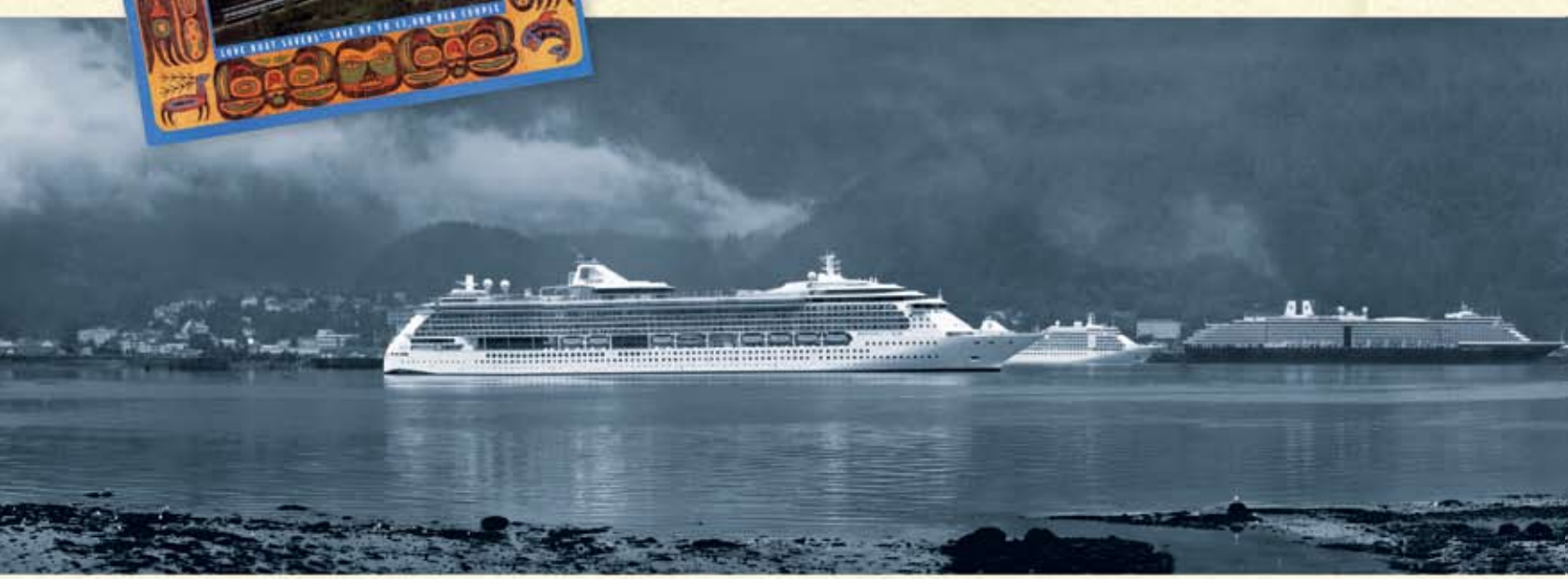
Astonishing numbers attest to the modern need, and ability, to vacation. In 2005, tourist arrivals surged to 402 million worldwide. (WTO 2006) Post-World War II prosperity and mobility made Alaska a prime destination for globe-trotters. Visitors came from the upper income brackets, and over 30 percent of them were part of an organized tour. However, the cost of travel accounted for half of their vacation expense. (Alaska 1978: 5)

A major accomplishment of the modern cruise ship industry was to bring down the cost of transportation. In 1964 only 11,000 tourists arrived by cruise ship. By 2000, ships carrying over 2,600 passengers each were a common sight in the harbors of Southeast towns and four or five large ships a day typically crowded into Ketchikan and Juneau. In real dollars, a cruise to Alaska now costs less than it did in the 1890s, and the middle class is able to fill the staterooms.

Big tour companies rely on the economies of scale to produce profits. Summer vacationers to Alaska in 2004 totaled about two million; 712,000 of these visitors arrived by cruiseship.[2] During the late twentieth century, most visitors abandoned independent touring for the streamlined convenience of cheap packaged tours and faster modes of transport. In 2005, almost a million visitors stopped in Juneau, a town of 30,000 residents.

Princess Cruises brochure, 1998.
Collection of the author.





Late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century souvenirs purchased in Juneau shops.
Collection of the author. "Alaska Mask" kit by Ken DeRoux. Collection of Connie Munro.

The tourism industry trends toward integration, standardization and consolidation. Carnival Corp. & PLC operates twelve cruise brands, three of which operate in Alaska—Carnival Cruise Lines, Princess Cruises and Holland America Line. Carnival Corporation had 2005 revenues of $11.6 billion with net income of $2.257 billion. Until the 1980s, most onshore tourist services were small in scale, locally operated and independently owned, infusing money into the resident economy. Recently, the cruise industry has become vertically integrated, gaining "an ability to control the nature of the tourism product on shore."[3]

The modern tourist is a traveling consumer, and "[c]onsumption is essential to industrial tourism….The global economy has utter dependence on continuing discretionary consumption."[4] It seems anything can be turned into a tourist consumable from wilderness, to historic site, to "moose nuggets." In 2002, Alaska visitors spent about $1.5 billion. (Cerveny 2005: 3)

Cruise ships in the Juneau harbor, 2006.
Photo by Ron Klein, Northlight Studio.

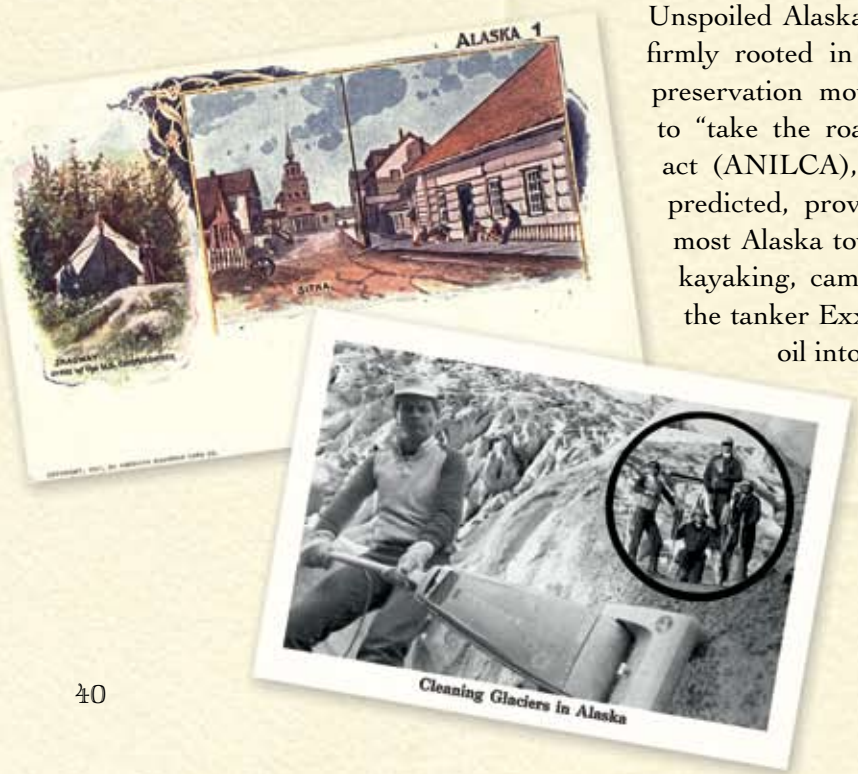
An Alaskan Interlude, *Alaska Steamship Company booklet.*
ASM 2003.25.2

Kayaking Aialik Bay.
Courtesy of Kayak Adventures Worldwide, Seward, Alaska.
Photo by Wendy Doughty.

Preserving the Romance

The romance of Alaska's history lives on through advertising and heritage experiences. Fascination with the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush never died. In 1976, after years of planning, the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park became a reality. The Alaska units of the park included thousands of acres in the Dyea/Chilkoot Trail and Skagway/White Pass areas. Somewhat unique in the national park system, it was one of the few units that included scattered, individual buildings within a living town. "One and all seemed glad to welcome the new park into existence. Skagway's residents hoped that the park would be a spur to tourist development, and voices on the national and international levels were happy to see the preservation of critical lands through which the gold rush stampeders moved."[5] Soon after, the purchase and restoration of historic buildings began. The novelty of the narrow-gauge White Pass & Yukon Railroad out of Skagway also endured. The railroad discontinued passenger service in 1982, but resumed service in 1988. Train ridership escalated in 2006 to 431,000 passengers, even though a highway eliminated the railroad's function as transportation between towns.

Unspoiled Alaska belonged to America, a symbolic wilderness firmly rooted in the national imagination and identity. The preservation movement of the 1970s heightened the desire to "take the road less traveled" and the 1980 conservation act (ANILCA), far from being the economic disaster some predicted, proved a boon to nature-based tourism. Today, most Alaska towns have outfitters and guides specializing in kayaking, camping, biking, and other "ecotourism." When the tanker Exxon Valdez spilled millions of gallons of crude oil into the pristine Prince William Sound, a national cry of outrage arose. Not only was Alaska threatened but the American psyche as well.



Alaska postcard, 1897. Collection of the author.
This is one in a set of 12 postcards, some of the first to be produced for the Alaska market.

"Cleaning Glaciers in Alaska" postcard by Jeff Brown.
Courtesy of Jeff Brown.

ABOVE: *Campaign button, "Vote Yes, Prop 4."* JDCM 2002.11.082.
This successful statewide proposition placed a $1 per head tax on cruise ship passengers in 2001.

LEFT: *Protest button, "Peace and Quiet Coalition," Juneau.* JDCM 2002.11.083

Tourism Issues

In Alaska, as elsewhere, balance and fairness issues have been raised between hosts and guests. The 8,800 residents of Sitka voted down a proposal to build a wharf that would have allowed direct offloading of cruise ship passengers into the downtown area, in hopes of controlling the number of visitors flooding into town. Community working groups formed to deal with the issues of increased traffic, stress on local services, overcrowded nature trails, noise and inflated real estate values. Although tourism brings tangible economic benefits to Alaska communities, these benefits are limited.

The largely unregulated tourism industry has brought prosperity and problems. After incidents of pollution by cruise ship companies in the late 1990s, the voters of Juneau approved a $5 head tax on each cruise ship passenger, the first such to be imposed by any state. The moneys raised would support tourist-related needs and programs. In a 2000 speech, Ginny Fay, Director of the Alaska Division of Tourism, clarified some of its tourism development goals: be community-led to allow each community to decide whether tourism is appropriate for their community and the types and level of visitation they desire; preserve the cultural values and quality of life for all Alaska residents; be environmentally and economically sustainable in the long term, and provide a significant portion of benefits to the local area where visitation occurs. (2000: 2) In 2001, Alaska strengthened monitoring of cruise ship air emissions and waste disposal, and in 2006, state voters levied a $50 head tax on all cruise ship passengers to support local infrastructure and further monitor the cruise industry. The ability of a community and its leaders to participate in tourism development is central to a sustainable tourism industry that benefits the community and protects natural, cultural, and historic resources. (Cerveny 2005: 7)

Cruise ship crew members on break in Skagway, 2006.
PHOTO BY RON KLEIN, NORTHLIGHT STUDIO.

Boarded up Juneau souvenir stores, closed for the winter, 2006.
PHOTO BY RON KLEIN, NORTHLIGHT STUDIO.

ALASKALAND, entrance sign. This history themed park in Fairbanks was built as a 1967 Centennial Project, and in 2001 reverted to its original name, Pioneer Park.

#3457, Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.

Main Street Alaska

Alaska tourism since the 1970s has become "a consumptive, dynamic resource, not a passive industry, and therefore [has] the potential to alter the landscape, economics, and culture of host destinations."[6] The power of tourism to transform small towns in Alaska is clearly visible. Host destinations evolve to suit the visitor or guest. Retail tourist businesses, especially the jewelry and curio shops that take over downtowns, are often no longer local companies, but multinational concerns that span the globe. When the tourist tide goes out, they follow elsewhere in the world. In Ketchikan almost half of the downtown is boarded up and vacant during the winter with 80 to 90 percent of the souvenir shops closed, raising the questions of who benefits and with what consequences. (Dunning 2000: 37-38) Shop owners can no longer afford to sell practical items to local residents, and souvenirs fill the shelves where "halibut jackets and rubber boots once dignified the space."[7]

When Alaskan towns become tourist destinations and are converted into historic replicas, community residents may lose their "sense of place" caused by "the long-term effects [that] include commoditization of history, place, and culture from which they can not readily escape. Ironically, in these instances, the contrived, at least for the tourists, has become authentic."[8] As marketing imagery and methods dominate the places where people live and work, a town "begins to become strange to the people who live there."[9] Selectively reconstructed history "as a pleasantly nostalgic memory…diminishes our capacity to make sense of our world through understanding how it came to be."[10]

"Once remote and inaccessible, the North is now perhaps the last frontier for the North American tourism industry, an industry that has continually sought out new, exciting, and exotic destinations."[11] With a decline in Alaska's resource extraction industries like logging and fishing, more Alaskans are turning to tourism as the industry with the greatest potential for growth. With its promise of freedom and challenge, Alaska beckons the tourist who desires to escape to a place that seems unspoiled, bigger than any theme park and much more real. Alaska is still authentic in the imagination of the tourist. It remains to be seen if the reality can be sustained.

"We Enjoyed Alaska" decal.
ASM 99.12.3

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Tlingit beaded pillow, Klawock, Alaska 1931.
SJM I-A-724

left: *Souvenir china: Baranof Castle, Sitka, Alaska plate, 1893 and Tonsina Lodge cup and saucer,* Courtesy of the Alaskan Heritage Bookshop; *SS* Queen *at Muir Glacier cream pitcher,* JDCM 2005.06.297.

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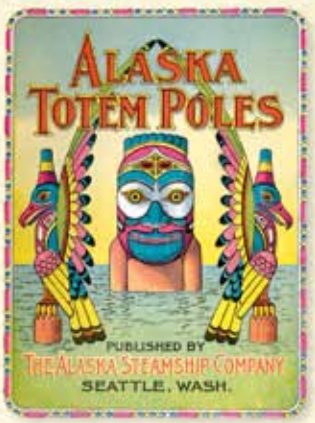

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"Every traveller is affected to a certain extent by the scenes through which he passes. The climate, customs and associations of each place, whether he will or not, have an influence upon his whole being….Can one visit the arctic region of Alaska, whose snowy peaks and giant glaciers are unsurpassed by the known wonders of the globe—whose untold wealth reminds him of the subterranean treasure of the genii,—and come away no richer in thought and feeling from the experience of this journey to the land of the midnight sun?"

CHARLES M. TAYLOR
Touring Alaska and the Yellowstone, 1901